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NOTE
The term 'Britain' is used informally in the *Survey of Current Affairs* to mean the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. 'Great Britain' comprises England, Wales and Scotland.

Prorogation and Opening of Parliament

REVIEW OF THE LAST SESSION

The Queen's speech on the prorogation of Parliament, summarising the work of the session, was delivered to both Houses of Parliament by the Lord Chancellor on 1 November.

The text of the speech[1] (with references to *Survey of Current Affairs* coverage in brackets) is as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons,

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to receive the State Visits of His Excellency the President of the Republic of India and Mrs Venkataraman in April and his Excellency the President of the Italian Republic in October.

We recall with pleasure our visit to New Zealand in February for the 150th anniversary of the Waitangi treaty and for the Commonwealth games. We remember with satisfaction our State Visit to Iceland in June, followed by a visit I made to Canada.

My Government have played a full and vigorous part in the actions taken by the United Nations and the international community to bring about the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of that country's independence and legitimate government. They have responded quickly to requests by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Governments of the region to contribute to their defence. They have made clear their determination that this act of aggression will not be allowed to succeed [see pp 277-80, 308-13 and 336-8].

My Government have welcomed continuing progress towards economic and political reform in the Soviet Union and the far-reaching political changes which have taken place in most Eastern European countries [see pp 453-6, 1989, and pp 12-14].

My Government have welcomed the changes in the German Democratic Republic. They have played a constructive part in the preparation for the unification of Germany and the ending of the four party rights and responsibilities [see pp 103-4, 169-70, 281 and 339-40].

My Government have maintained a sound defence based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. They have played a full part in the process of adapting NATO to the new circumstances in Europe set in hand at the meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in London in July [see pp 237-9].

My Government have continued to work for balanced and verifiable arms control agreements. They have played a full part in the negotiations on reducing conventional forces in Europe and in the talks in Geneva on the abolition of chemical weapons [see pp 158-61 and 276-7]. *My Government played an important part in the Fourth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty* [see pp 307-8].

My Government have continued to work actively for the completion of the single European market [see pp 106-7]. *They have made proposals relating to the forthcoming intergovernmental conference for economic and monetary union. They played a full part in the Community and wider international response to economic and political reform in Eastern Europe and in multilateral negotiations to liberalise international trade* [see pp 164-8].

They have, with our European partners, concluded a fourth Lomé agreement [see pp 19-20].

My Government have welcomed the independence of Namibia and its membership of the Commonwealth [see pp 131-2]. *In South Africa there has been welcome progress towards the end of apartheid* [see pp 63-4 and 107-9].

My Government have maintained a substantial and effective overseas aid programme to assist developing countries [see pp 281-3].

My Government welcomed the extension of democratic government in Latin America. They were pleased to re-establish diplomatic relations with Argentina [see p 110] *and Iran* [see p 347].

My Government have continued their sustained efforts to combat terrorism in the United Kingdom and overseas. They welcomed the recent release of hostages from Lebanon and have continued their efforts to secure the release of all Britons held hostage or detained in the Middle East [see p 206].

My Government convened the world ministerial drugs summit in April, and have given practical support to other Governments, particularly in Colombia. They have concluded agreements to confiscate drug traffickers' funds with seven Governments [see pp 186-91].

My Government hosted the second meeting of parties to the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer in June, at which a significant strengthening of controls was agreed [see pp 256-8].

Members of the House of Commons,

I thank you for the provision which you have made for the honour and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.

[1] *Hansard*, Vol 178, No 167, cols 1088-90.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons,

My Government have continued to pursue firm financial policies necessary for sustained economic growth [see pp 383-4]. *To reinforce these anti-inflationary policies, they have brought the pound sterling into the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System* [see pp 338-9 and 378-80]. *They have made a public sector debt repayment for the third successive year* [see p 137], *reducing Government debt to levels not seen since the first world war. National output has continued to grow and living standards to increase. The number of people in employment has risen further* [see p 136].

As part of my Government's programme to improve the performance of the economy and encourage saving, legislation has been enacted to allow the introduction of tax exempt special savings accounts [see p 135] *and to abolish the composite rate of tax* [see p 139] *and stamp duty on share transactions* [see p 135]. *The independent taxation of married women has come into effect* [see pp 137-8].

The 10 water and sewerage companies in England and Wales have been sold [see pp 473-5, 1989], *continuing my Government's programme of* encouraging greater industrial efficiency and wider share ownership.

An Act has been passed to provide new powers to control pollution and waste, and also to reorganise nature conservation in Great Britain [see pp 81-4, 294 and 394-5].

A White Paper has been published providing Britain's first comprehensive survey of all aspects of environmental concern, and setting out a strategy for the environment over the next decade [see pp 358-61].

An Act has been passed to improve aviation and maritime security [see p 77].

Legislation has been enacted to make further reforms in industrial relations and trade union law [see pp 73-5].

Legislation has been enacted to improve maintenance arrangements for lone parents, to give better protection for members of occupational pension schemes and to begin changing the structure of disability benefits [see pp 87-8].

An Act has been passed to improve the National Health Service and the management of community care [see pp 29-35].

An Act has been passed to institute a legal framework for scientific developments in human fertilisation and embryology [see pp 191-3 and 373].

An Act has been passed to improve the administration of civil justice and increase choice in the provision of legal services [see pp 5-7 and 375].

An Act has been passed to strengthen the law on food safety and consumer protection [see pp 145-7].

Legislation has been enacted to supplement students' grants with loans [see pp 481-2, 1989].

My Government have worked to restore confidence in Hong Kong, building on the Sino-British joint agreement [see pp 64-6 and 109-10]. *My Government have passed an Act to encourage key Hong Kong personnel and their families to remain there by giving them the assurance of British citizenship, thereby helping to maintain the future stability and prosperity of the territory* [see pp 170-1].

An Act has been passed to reform the framework for commercial broadcasting, providing for a wider choice while strengthening the oversight of programme standards [see pp 37-43].

An Act has been passed to enhance international co-operation in the investigation and prosecution of crime [see pp 112 and 129].

In Northern Ireland, my Government have continued their efforts to combat terrorism, to tackle the Province's political, social and economic problems and to work constructively within the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement [see pp 233-5].

For Scotland, legislation has been enacted to create Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to provide for the winding up of the new town development corporations and to effect certain law reform measures [see pp 75-6].

PROGRAMME FOR THE NEW SESSION

The Queen's speech on the opening of the new session of Parliament – the fourth session of Britain's fiftieth Parliament – was delivered in the House of Lords on 7 November to members of both Houses. Among the legislation which the Government proposes to introduce are measures to improve efficiency and safety in transport; to strengthen the criminal justice system; to improve the system of child maintenance; and to provide new benefits for disabled people.

The Government has also stated its intention to maintain firm financial policies to reduce inflation and encourage growth. The Government will host the next Economic Summit of the seven major industrialised nations in London in July 1991 and will promote further international co-operation on environmental issues.

The text of the speech,[1] which outlines the Government's policies for the coming session, is as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons,

I look forward to visiting the United States of America in May and being present on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Zimbabwe next Autumn.

My Government attach the highest priority to national security, and to the preservation of international peace with freedom and justice. They will give full support to NATO as the basis for collective Western defence, and will maintain adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces. They will play a full part in adapting NATO strategy and will take forward work on restructuring our forces to reflect the welcome changes in Europe and threats to peace in other parts of the world.

My Government will work for balanced and verifiable measures of arms control. They welcome the prospect of an agreement on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and will be active in further negotiations on this, and in the multilateral negotiations in Geneva on the abolition of chemical weapons.

My Government will continue to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations. My

[1] *Hansard*, Vol 180, No 1, cols 4-6.

Government will work with the utmost determination, together with our Allies and the whole international community, for the unconditional implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which require the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, and the restoration of the independence and legitimate government of Kuwait. My Government will maintain their efforts to secure the release of all Britons held hostage or detained in Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the Middle East. My Government will continue to work for long-term peace in the Middle East including a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

My Government will host the next Economic Summit in London in July [see p 245].

My Government will work to strengthen still further the good relations between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, and to buttress the new democracies in Eastern Europe. They will play an active part in the Paris meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

My Government welcome the unification of Germany and look forward to working closely with the Government of the United Germany.

My Government will continue to work with our Community partners to complete the Single Market [see pp 239-40]; *to reinforce budgetary discipline; to continue reform of the Common Agricultural Policy* [see pp 114-15] *and to bring about a successful conclusion to the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations* [see pp 328-9, 1986]. *They will contribute constructively to the intergovernmental conferences on economic and monetary union and Community institutions beginning in December* [see p 377]. *They welcome the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to London* [see p 209].

My Government will promote further international co-operation on environmental issues [see pp 222-4, 256-8 and 358-61].

My Government will maintain a substantial aid programme aimed at promoting sustainable economic and social progress and good government in developing countries.

My Government will continue their policy of encouragement to all sides in South Africa to enter negotiations to create through peaceful means a democratic non-racial society.

My Government will work vigorously to fulfil their responsibilities for Hong Kong, building on the Sino-British Joint Declaration. They will honour their commitments to the people of the Falkland Islands.

My Government will continue to play a full part in the Commonwealth.

My Government will maintain their fight against terrorism in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Members of the House of Commons,

Estimates for the Public Service will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons,

My Government will maintain firm financial policies, strengthened by the exchange rate mechanism [see pp 338-9 and 378-80], *designed to reduce inflation and foster the conditions necessary for sustained growth. They will continue to promote enterprise and improve the working of the economy.*

They will maintain firm control of public expenditure with the aim of keeping its share of national income on a downward trend.

A Bill will be introduced to facilitate contractor operation of the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Legislation will be introduced to provide for the sale of the Insurance Services business of the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

My Government will promote improved efficiency and safety in transport. Legislation will be introduced to encourage privately financed roads; to reform procedures for streetworks; to improve road traffic; to convert trust ports into private companies; and to provide for a second Severn crossing.

Legislation will be introduced to improve arrangements for compensation for compulsory purchase of land and buildings and to make the town and country planning system more efficient [see pp 359-60].

My Government will continue to work for the regeneration of our cities [see pp 120-1].

My Government will vigorously pursue their policies in fighting crime. A Bill will be brought forward for England and Wales to deal with sentencing of offenders and to strengthen the parole system [see pp 53-9].

My Government will work vigorously to combat the trafficking and misuse of drugs nationally and internationally.

My Government are concerned to strengthen parental responsibility for children. Measures will be introduced to improve the assessment, collection and enforcement of maintenance [see pp 393-4].

A Bill will again be brought before you to give our courts the jurisdiction to try alleged war criminals [see pp 128-9].

My Government will continue to take action to improve quality in education. A Bill will be introduced to establish new machinery for negotiating the pay and conditions of school teachers in England and Wales.

My Government will continue to work to improve the quality of Health and Social Services.

In Northern Ireland, My Government will be resolute in their efforts to defeat terrorism: a Bill will be introduced to replace existing anti-terrorism legislation [see pp 3-4, 1987]. *They will sustain their efforts to secure political progress, to strengthen the economy and to promote mutual respect and trust throughout the community. They will maintain positive relations with the Republic of Ireland.*

For Scotland, a Bill will be introduced to create a Natural Heritage Agency to achieve an integrated approach to conservation and countryside matters [see p 294].

Legislation will be introduced to provide new benefits for disabled people [see pp 86-7].

Other measures will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons,

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

By-elections and State of the Parties

Details of the results of three recent parliamentary by-elections and the present state of the parties in the House of Commons are given below.

The Liberal Democrats won the seat at Eastbourne in the by-election on 18 October and the Labour Party retained the seats at Bootle and Bradford North in the by-elections on 8 November.

In Eastbourne the Liberal Democrat candidate, Mr David Bellotti, won by a majority of 4,550 votes; at Bootle the Labour candidate, Mr Joe Benton, won by a majority of 19,465 votes; and at Bradford North the Labour candidate, Mr Terry Rooney, won by a majority of 9,514 votes. The by-elections were caused by the deaths in July of Mr Ian Gow, Conservative MP for Eastbourne, and Mr Michael Carr, Labour MP for Bootle, and the death in August of Mr Patrick Wall, Labour MP for Bradford North.

The results of the by-elections were:

Eastbourne

D. Bellotti (Liberal Democrat)	23,415
R. Hickmet (Conservative)	18,865
C. Atkins (Labour)	2,308

Five other candidates received between them a total of 1,484 votes; all lost their deposits. Votes were cast by 60·7 per cent of the electorate.

At the general election in June 1987 (see p 187, 1987), the seat was held by the Conservative Party, with Mr Ian Gow polling 33,587 votes, followed by the Alliance candidate with 16,664 and the Labour candidate with 4,928. Votes were cast by 75·6 per cent of the electorate.

Bootle

J. Benton (Labour)	22,052
J. Clappison (Conservative)	2,587
J. Cunningham (Liberal Democrat)	2,216

Four other candidates received between them a total of 1,290 votes; all lost their deposits. Votes were cast by 39·8 per cent of the electorate.

The seat was last contested at a parliamentary by-election on 24 May, when 50·2 per cent of the electorate voted. The seat was held by the Labour Party, with Mr Michael Carr polling 26,737 votes, followed by the Conservative candidate with 3,220 votes and the Liberal Democrat candidate with 3,179 (see p 197).

Bradford North

T. Rooney (Labour)	18,619
D. Ward (Liberal Democrat)	9,105
J. Atkin (Conservative)	6,048
D. Pidcock (Islamic Party)	800

Six other candidates received between them a total of 1,457 votes; they and the Islamic Party candidate all lost their deposits. Votes were cast by 53 per cent of the electorate.

At the general election in June 1987, when 72·7 per cent of the electorate voted, the seat was held by the Labour Party, with Mr Patrick Wall polling 21,009 votes, followed by the Conservative candidate with 19,376 votes and the Alliance candidate with 8,656 votes.

State of the Parties

Following the by-elections, the state of the parties in the House of Commons is:

Conservative	371
Labour	225
Liberal Democrats	20
Social Democrats	3
Scottish National[1]	5
Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalist)	3
Ulster Unionist (Northern Ireland)	9
Democratic Unionist (Northern Ireland)	3
Social Democratic and Labour (Northern Ireland)	3
Ulster Popular Unionist (Northern Ireland)	1
Sinn Fein (Northern Ireland)	1
Vacant seats (Paisley North, Paisley South)	2
TOTAL	646

The four remaining seats are held by the Speaker of the House of Commons and his three deputies (the Chairman of Ways and Means and the first and second Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means), who do not vote except in their official capacity in the event of a tie. The government majority over all the other parties is 98 although the Sinn Fein MP has not taken his seat.

Recent Legislation

The public Acts of Parliament passed since August 1990 are listed below.

Broadcasting Act 1990 (see pp 37-43). Various amendments were made to the Bill during its passage through Parliament. These will be covered in the December issue of the *Survey of Current Affairs*. Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 42. HMSO, £15·60. ISBN 0 10 544290 9.

Caldey Island Act 1990. Restores the rights to vote and to stand for election to the small island community of Caldey in south-west Wales. The island has never been included in the local government system or in a parliamentary constituency although residents were nonetheless included on the electoral register. The Act ensures that inclusion on the electoral register can continue. It also makes the islanders subject to local taxation for the first time. The island retains its unique status of not being fully integrated within the local government system. Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 44. HMSO, 55p. ISBN 0 10 544490 1.

[1]Mr Dick Douglas, MP for Dunfermline West, who formerly sat as an independent Labour member (see p 128), has joined the Scottish National Party.

Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (see pp 5-7 and 375). Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 41. HMSO. ISBN 0 10 544190 2.[1]

Employment Act 1990 (see pp 73-5). Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 38. HMSO, £4·10. ISBN 0 10 543890 1.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 (see pp 81-4 and 394-5). Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 43. HMSO, £14·45. ISBN 0 10 544390 5.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 (see pp 191-3). Changes made during the Committee stage of the Bill include a number of amendments to the Abortion Act 1967. These include the introduction of a time limit of 24 weeks for the largest category of abortions; and two new categories for which there will be no time limit: grave permanent injury to the health of the woman; and where there is substantial risk of serious fetal handicap. Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 37. HMSO, £5·85. ISBN 0 10 543790 5.

Landlord and Tenant (Licensed Premises) Act 1990. Seeks to promote competition and consumer choice in the supply of beer by giving tenants of pubs the same protection as other business tenants under Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 39. HMSO, 55p. ISBN 0 10 543990 8.

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990. Improves supervision of charities, increases the choice of legal services for clients, reforms the system of liquor licensing and enables courts to hear evidence from other countries by means of live television links. Royal Assent: 1.11.90. Ch 40. HMSO, £9·85. ISBN 0 10 544090 6.

Forthcoming Resignation of the Prime Minister

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP, announced on 22 November her intention to resign as Prime Minister once a new leader of the Conservative Party had been elected by Conservative Members of Parliament.

The first ballot for the leadership of the Conservative Party was held on 20 November. The second ballot will be held on 27 November and, if no candidate obtains an overall majority of all those entitled to vote, a final ballot will be held on 29 November. The leadership election will be covered in the December issue of the *Survey of Current Affairs.* Details of the separate ministerial changes in early November are given below.

[1]Further publication details of this Act were not available at the time of going to press.

Ministerial Changes

Several ministerial changes were announced by the Prime Minister's Office in early November following the resignation of the Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, as Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons on 1 November. Details of further changes following the forthcoming resignation of the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP (see above) will be given in the December issue of the *Survey of Current Affairs.*

The new appointments to the Cabinet are:

Secretary of State for Education and Science
Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP (former Secretary of State for Health)

Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons
Rt Hon John MacGregor, OBE, MP (former Secretary of State for Education and Science)

Secretary of State for Health
Rt Hon William Waldegrave, MP (former Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

The other appointments are:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Minister of State
Hon Douglas Hogg, QC, MP (former Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry)

Department of Trade and Industry
Minister of State
Mr John Redwood, MP (former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Mr Edward Leigh, MP

THE CABINET

Following the new appointments, the current composition of the Cabinet is as follows:

Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service
Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP

Lord Chancellor
Rt Hon The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Rt Hon Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP

Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon John Major, MP

Secretary of State for the Home Department
Rt Hon David Waddington, QC, MP

Secretary of State for Defence
Rt Hon Tom King, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Rt Hon Kenneth Baker, MP

Secretary of State for Education and Science
Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons
Rt Hon John MacGregor, OBE, MP

Secretary of State for Scotland
Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP

Secretary of State for Transport
Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson, MP

Secretary of State for Energy
Rt Hon John Wakeham, MP

Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords
Rt Hon The Lord Belstead

Secretary of State for Social Security
Rt Hon Antony Newton, OBE, MP

Secretary of State for the Environment
Rt Hon Christopher Patten, MP

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Rt Hon Peter Brooke, MP

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Rt Hon John Gummer, MP

Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Rt Hon Norman Lamont, MP

Secretary of State for Employment
Rt Hon Michael Howard, QC, MP

Secretary of State for Wales
Rt Hon David Hunt, MBE, MP

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Rt Hon Peter Lilley, MP

Secretary of State for Health
Rt Hon William Waldegrave, MP

Ethnic Minorities

New arrangements for the more effective administration of central government grant to local government authorities with substantial ethnic minority populations were announced by the Home Secretary, Mr David Waddington, on 18 October.

Background

Under the Local Government Act 1966 the Home Secretary can pay grants to local authorities which, in his opinion, are required to make special provision for the needs of ethnic minority populations from the Commonwealth whose language or culture differs from that of the rest of the community. The grant is payable only in respect of staffing costs at a rate of 75 per cent of expenditure. It currently supports some 12,000 posts; four-fifths of the grant goes to education, mainly for the teaching of English, the rest being allocated, among others, to social services, housing, business and employment. The provision for 1990-91 is £110 million.

New Arrangements

The main changes, which will come into effect in April 1992, will focus grant on supporting the Government's objective of breaking down barriers experienced by members of the ethnic minorities.

Giving details in a written parliamentary answer (*Hansard*, Vol 177, No 158, written answers, cols 897-9), Mr Waddington said that the changes were being made in advance of legislation to ensure that the greatest need was identified in the local authority and voluntary sectors. Grant, to be known as ethnic minority grant, would in future not be open-ended and the need for it would have to be shown.

Mr Waddington emphasised that there would be greater scope to pursue a larger number and wider range of more innovative projects, in particular through the increased involvement of voluntary organisations. This would be achieved by requiring local authorities to identify suitable voluntary sector projects for the placement of local authority staff and by devoting a proportion of the grant to the voluntary sector through the new Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs – see p 385). Voluntary organisations – in particular those from areas with non-Commonwealth ethnic minorities that had previously been unable to apply for such funds – would be able to apply for ethnic minority grant through the TECs.

The emphasis of the grant will in future be on practical projects working to identified needs, such as a lack of English or low achievement in schools. All new projects will also need to set clear objectives for achievement. Examples of objectives in education are:

- to give school-age children, whose mother tongue is not English, a command of English and to help them progress in all areas of the curriculum at the same rate as others in their age group;
- to strengthen ties between schools and the parents of ethnic minority pupils; and
- to give ethnic minority adults, who have an inadequate command of English or who lack numeracy or literacy skills, sufficient knowledge and skills to compete for jobs and to participate fully in the mainstream of national life.

The grant will also be used to increase the awareness and take-up of educational and job opportunities by young people from the ethnic minorities. Employers and community groups will be advised on the potential and training needs of such people. Members of ethnic minorities with small businesses will also be encouraged to take up business support services. The creation and growth of small firms and self-employment will be encouraged.

Courts and Legal Services Act

Legislation providing for improved provision of legal services to the public and more effective conduct of business in the civil courts received the Royal Assent on 1 November.

The Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 followed a White Paper published in July 1989. Its main provisions were debated in the House of Lords during the second reading in December 1989 (see pp 5-7).

Main Provisions

The Civil Courts

The main provisions of the Act affecting the courts will:

- provide for the reallocation of the business of the civil courts by matching the weight and complexity of each case more closely to the level of court which will hear it;
- remove all restrictions on rights of audience in certain county court proceedings and enable lay representatives to appear on behalf of litigants;
- enable further procedural changes to be introduced which will speed up the progress of cases and cut the cost of civil litigation; and
- extend the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to investigate complaints of maladministration by court staff.

Legal Services

The Act will establish new machinery to:

- allow solicitors to gain wider rights of audience; barristers to gain the right to conduct litigation; and new classes of advocate and litigator to become qualified to appear in the courts;
- extend the categories allowed to do probate and conveyancing work; and
- create a new office of Legal Services Ombudsman to oversee the handling of complaints against lawyers by their professional bodies. The Ombudsman will have power to recommend that the professional body or lawyer, as appropriate, should pay compensation to the complainant. It is planned that the Ombudsman should take up his jurisdiction in January 1991. The Law Society (the solicitors' professional body) will have additional powers to deal with complaints, including the power to require a solicitor to compensate a client who has received poor service.

The Act will also remove current restrictions on the use of 'no win no fee' arrangements while preserving necessary safeguards concerning the types of case where this may apply. In addition, it will allow solicitors to enter into multinational partnerships with foreign lawyers.

Shorter Note

EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

The first annual review of the Next Steps initiative (see pp 156-7 and 272) was published on 31 October. The review gives details of the 34 agencies, employing some 80,000 people, which have been set up under the project. It is expected that by summer 1991 about 200,000 people will be working in some 50 agencies. The Government's reply to the House of Commons Treasury and Civil Service Committee's report on progress in Next Steps was published on the same day.

In the annual review the Minister of State for the Civil Service, Mr David Mellor, writes that 'Next Steps represents a major advance in improving the management of the Civil Service'. The review points out that 'what matters are improvements in management leading through to benefits for taxpayers, customers and staff. ... Agencies are improving the way they give value for money and deliver services.'

The review cites the improved range of services offered, mentioning in particular Companies House, the Vehicle Inspectorate, the Driving Standards Agency and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. It also refers to major improvements in financial performance at Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the Historic Royal Palaces and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. It explains that most of the agencies cover all or some of their costs from fees.

The Government's reply to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee's report on progress in Next Steps emphasises the Government's commitment to the reform. It welcomes the Committee's endorsement of the non-partisan nature of the reforms. It adds that: 'any government will want a Civil Service which is as effective and efficient as possible in delivering what is wanted of it'. Next Steps, says the reply, 'provides the flexibility to enable the Civil Service to respond both to changes in what a Government wants, and to changes of Government'.

The following executive agencies have been established since May 1990:

Land Registry

National Engineering Laboratory (Department of Trade and Industry – DTI)

National Physical Laboratory (DTI)

Ordnance Survey

Sources: Cabinet Office (Office of the Minister for the Civil Service) news release, 31.10.90; *Improving Management in Government – The Next Steps Agencies Review 1990.* Cm 1261. HMSO, £8·30. ISBN 0 10 112612 3; *Progress in the Next Steps Initiative. The Government Reply to the Eighth Report from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, Session 1989-90.* Cm 1263. HMSO, £4·10. ISBN 0 10 112632 8.

European Community Developments in 1990

Further impetus was given to the completion of the European Community's single market during the first six months of 1990, according to a White Paper on developments within the Community. The White Paper also deals with other Community policies in areas such as the environment, health and safety at work, transport, parliamentary scrutiny of Community legislation and external relations.

The Single Market

The White Paper[1] says that 69 measures aimed at removing barriers to trade within the Community were finally adopted, agreed in principle or had common positions agreed for submission to the European Parliament. Two-thirds of the single market programme (see pp 239-40) has now been agreed.

The British Government welcomes the increased attention that the European Commission is giving to implementation of single market measures in national legislation. In March 1990 the Commission confirmed Britain's good record; only nine out of 90 measures were yet to be implemented by Britain, the best record of any member state.

Institutional Reform

In June the European Council (see pp 239-42) decided that an intergovernmental conference should take place on Community institutional reform. During May and June foreign ministers drew up a paper setting out the areas where such reform could be considered. Although not making specific proposals, it covered the need for greater involvement of national parliaments as well as the European Parliament, better implementation of Community policies and closer co-operation on foreign policy issues. Britain put forward a number of ideas on these matters.

Economic and Monetary Union

The European Council also decided that an intergovernmental conference should take place on the question of economic and monetary union in the Community. Britain put forward proposals designed to develop the present European Currency Unit (ECU – a basket of the 12 Community currencies) into a new currency in its own right whose use would be voluntary. However, it could lead eventually to a single currency for the Community if it were to be widely used (see pp 242-3).

The Environment

In March agreement was reached on a regulation setting up a European Environment Agency responsible for the collection, co-ordination and analysis of environmental information within the Community. The aim is to improve the scientific basis for decision-taking and to assist the Commission in overseeing the implementation of Community legislation.

In June a directive was adopted requiring member states to provide the public with access to environmental information held by public authorities with responsibility for the environment. A directive agreed in June called on all member states to encourage clean technologies. Another directive agreed in the same month is designed to encourage the recycling or controlled disposal of spent batteries containing mercury, cadmium or lead; certain batteries containing more than a specified amount of mercury will be banned from sale from 1 January 1993.

Health and Safety

Several directives were agreed on health and safety for workers. These included minimum health and safety requirements for handling heavy loads where there is a risk of back injury, and certain requirements for workers using display screen equipment. Other measures protect workers against risks arising, or likely to arise, from exposure to biological agents or cancer-causing agents.

Transport

In June Community transport ministers adopted measures enshrining in Community law earlier commitments to the liberalisation of air transport by the end of 1992. The British Government, the White Paper points out, believes that only the introduction of free, open and, above all, fair competition in air transport will meet the needs of the European consumer.

Parliamentary Scrutiny of Legislation

On 21 May the Government published a report responding to recommendations from the House of Commons Procedure Committee on changes in the

[1] *Developments in the European Community January-June 1990.* Cm 1234. HMSO, £8-10. ISBN 0 10 112342 6.

system regarding parliamentary scrutiny of Community legislation. It accepted most of the Committee's recommendations. Three new standing committees are to be established, each specialising in particular subject areas. The committees will have the power to question ministers for up to an hour about relevant Community proposals before they are debated in the House. The aim is to give an increased role to Members of Parliament by allowing them to probe government policy in greater depth. In future the regular six-monthly debates on developments within the Community will be held shortly before meetings of the European Council to allow consideration of subjects expected to be discussed by the Council. The present Select Committee on European Legislation will be retained.

External Relations

Major treaties and agreements signed by the Community included one with Argentina on trade and economic co-operation. Trade and economic co-operation agreements were also signed with the then German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

These provide a framework for the liberalisation of trading relations between the Community and these countries and are designed to facilitate co-operation on agriculture, the environment, training, industry, science and technology, and tourism. In line with a British proposal, the Community has agreed that closer forms of association should be negotiated with the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe. Such association agreements would involve the gradual introduction of free trade; freedom of movement for capital, services and people; political dialogue; and economic co-operation.

In May the Community approved a regulation to set up a European Training Foundation to contribute to vocational training in Central and Eastern European countries. A decision was also approved on the TEMPUS scheme, which will enable higher education institutions in these countries to participate in education and training programmes modelled on existing Community programmes. In addition, the Community agreed to provide a medium-term loan of up to $1,000 million to Hungary.

In July the Community agreed to extend its economic aid programme to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

The December 1989 meeting of the European Council (see pp 457-9, 1989) called for the establishment of a European Bank to make loans and assist reconstruction and development in Eastern European countries. The articles of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were signed in May (see p 209). The Community has a collective shareholding of 51 per cent, Britain holding 8·5 per cent of the shares. The Bank's headquarters will be in London.

Formal negotiations between the Community and member countries of the European Free Trade Association on the creation of a European Economic Area began in June. The aim is for the agreement to enter into force by January 1993 to coincide with the completion of the Community's single market.

European Council

At the European Council meeting in Rome on 27 and 28 October, the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher expressed reservations regarding European union and opposed the imposition of a single Community currency in Britain.

EUROPEAN UNION

In the conclusions of the presidency, the European Council confirmed the will to transform the Community into a European union. Britain, however, reserved its position on specific issues.

Political Union

The Council envisaged the development of the Community's political dimension and the extension of its powers, but with due regard being paid to national identities and to the principle of subsidiarity (see p 167). The democratic legitimacy of the Community would be enhanced by the development of the European Parliament's role in the legislative sphere. European citizenship would be defined, to be additional to citizenship of a member state. The Council also recorded consensus on the objective of a common foreign and security policy to strengthen the identity and coherence of the Community in international affairs. On these aspects of political union Britain preferred not to pre-empt the debate in the intergovernmental conference in December 1990.

Economic and Monetary Union

On economic and monetary union Britain was unable to accept the approach favoured by its Community partners. The Council agreed that the Community's development should be based on an open market system and sound public finances. It envisaged the creation of a new monetary institution comprising member states' central banks and a central body, exercising full responsibility for monetary policy. The institution would aim to maintain price stability and would support the general economic policy of the Community. The Council considered that with the achievement of the final phase of economic and monetary union, exchange rates would be irrevocably fixed and the Community would have a strong and stable ECU (European Currency Unit – see pp 242-3 and 383) as a single currency.

Britain's partners wanted the new monetary institution to be established at the start of the second stage of economic and monetary union in January 1994. It would co-ordinate monetary policies, prepare for the future conduct of a single monetary policy and oversee the development of the ECU. The European Commission and the council of the monetary institution would report within three years to the Community on the functioning of the second stage and on progress towards monetary convergence, in order to prepare the decision concerning the passage to the third phase, which would occur 'within a reasonable time'.

Britain's Stance

While ready to move beyond stage one of economic and monetary union through the creation of a new

monetary institution and a common Community currency, Britain believed that decisions on the substance of that move should precede decisions on its timing.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

European Integration

In a statement to the House of Commons on 30 October (*Hansard*, Vol 178, No 165, cols 869-90), the Prime Minister said that Community foreign ministers had prepared a report listing a range of possible institutional changes for consideration at the intergovernmental conference to be convened in December on political union (see p 240). Although Britain had argued at the Council that it would be wrong to prejudge the conclusions of the conference, other member states had wished to give the conference specific directions. She had therefore reserved Britain's position on issues such as the extension of Community powers into new areas, greater legislative powers for the European Parliament, the definition of European citizenship and a common foreign and security policy. These were issues for discussion at the conference itself rather than to be settled in advance.

The Prime Minister said that Britain could not accept the initiation of the next stage of economic and monetary union (see pp 408-9, 1989) before there was agreement on what that stage should comprise. She reaffirmed that the Government would not accept the imposition of a single currency on Britain nor surrender the use of the pound sterling as Britain's currency. 'The hard ECU would be a parallel currency, not a single currency. If, as time went by, people and governments chose to use it widely, it could evolve towards a single currency.' She continued: 'But our national currency would remain unless a decision to abolish it were freely taken by future generations of Parliament and people. A single currency is not the policy of this Government.'

Trade and Agriculture

Mrs Thatcher criticised the failure of the European Community to agree a negotiating position on agriculture for the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations (see pp 113-14 and 246). The outcome of the Uruguay Round, due to be completed before the end of 1990, would decide whether world trade would become open or relapse into protectionism. She said that the Community had given an unequivocal commitment in April 1989, and again in July 1990, to make substantial and progressive reductions in agricultural support. However, by 15 October all the major participants in the Uruguay Round with the exception of the Community had tabled negotiating offers on agriculture.

The Prime Minister said that Community agriculture ministers had discussed the European Commission's proposal for a 30 per cent reduction in agricultural support on six occasions but had failed to reach agreement,[1] the main opposition coming from France and the Federal Republic of Germany. Multilateral negotiations between the leading groups of countries could not commence until the Community's proposals had been tabled. 'If we fail', said Mrs Thatcher, 'it will give a signal to the world that the Community is protectionist.'

[1]Agreement on the Commission's proposals was subsequently reached by the Community agriculture ministers on 6 November.

Gulf Crisis

The Prime Minister said that the European Council had agreed a statement demanding Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and confirming the commitment of Community member states to full implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions (see p 381).

Hungary

The Council issued a statement of support for Hungary in pursuing its path towards democratic and economic reforms. This was, said Mrs Thatcher, in response to appeals by the Hungarian Government for Community help in dealing with problems arising from the reduction in the supply of oil from the Soviet Union. At Britain's suggestion, the Council agreed on the disbursement of the second instalment of the Community loan to Hungary (see p 377).

Conclusion

Britain, concluded Mrs Thatcher, intended to be part of the further political, economic and monetary development of the Community. It believed that, in negotiations on particular points rather than concepts or generalities, solutions would be found which would 'enable the Community to go forward as Twelve'.

The Prime Minister said that the Government was fighting for the interests and concerns of the British people, for a new world trade agreement and for help to the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. Britain wished to co-operate more closely with its partners in the Community and fully accepted its treaty commitments. However, she concluded, 'we are determined to retain our fundamental ability to govern ourselves through Parliament'.

European Monetary System

In a House of Commons debate on 23 October on Britain's membership of the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr John Major, said that membership would act as an important discipline. Monetary policy – buttressed by fiscal policy – would need to remain tight in order to maintain downward pressure on inflation.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Mr Major opened the debate (*Hansard*, Vol 178, No 160, cols 195-291) with a motion which expressed congratulations to the Government on Britain's membership of the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) of the European Monetary System (see pp 338-9) and on the conduct of economic policy. The leader of the official Opposition, Mr Neil Kinnock,

moved an amendment which, while recognising the potential for stability afforded by ERM membership, noted the failure of the Government's economic policy. The amendment was defeated by 323 votes to 188.

Government View

The Conditions for ERM Membership

The Chancellor reminded the House that, in 1988, the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, had set out Britain's commitment to joining the ERM and the conditions for membership. Conditions regarding freedom of capital movement, the completion of the single European market (see pp 239-40), the strengthening of competition policy and the liberalisation of financial services had effectively been met for a while. For some months the key remaining condition had been that the state of the domestic economy – particularly the inflation performance – should enable Britain to accept the discipline that membership entailed. It was important that Britain's inflation rate should converge on that of its European partners, thus enabling Britain to compete at the chosen exchange rate. This was why Britain did not join the ERM until the Government was sure that its tight monetary policy was succeeding in bringing down inflationary pressures (see p 383).

Inflation

Figures on monetary growth as well as indicators on retail sales, car sales, the housing market and savings all pointed to a slowing in levels of activity, which was necessary if inflation was to fall. This combination of conditions had prompted the one percentage point cut in interest rates that had coincided with ERM entry. Inflation was always one of the last measures to respond to a fall in the growth of demand. At the moment, the picture was complicated by the recent rise in oil prices, which could still lead to a further increase in the recorded rate of inflation. However, the Chancellor was in no doubt that inflation would decline substantially throughout 1991. The fall would be particularly sharp from April 1991, for two reasons: first, the underlying rate would be lower; secondly, some of the unusual adverse factors that had artificially boosted the recorded rate would drop out in 1991. Britain's inflation performance would therefore improve both in absolute terms and in relation to that of its European competitors. 'There was therefore no reason for further delay in meeting our long-standing commitment to join the ERM.'

Monetary and Fiscal Policy

Membership was neither a soft option nor a short-term one, Mr Major stressed. Maintaining the exchange rate would be an important discipline, with tight monetary conditions having to be sustained to exert continued downward pressure on inflation. ERM membership reinforced rather than replaced the need for a tight monetary policy. Membership in the short term would require tough action to ensure low inflation thereafter. That meant making no further cuts in interest rates until it was prudent to do so.

The Chancellor explained that the Government had chosen a wide margin of fluctuation for sterling (6 per cent in either direction of its central rate instead of the alternative of 2·25 per cent) in order to give the currency an opportunity to settle down. When conditions allowed, however, the narrow band would be adopted.

Fiscal policy would continue to be used to buttress monetary policy. However, there would be no resort to fiscal fine-tuning (manipulation of fiscal policy so as to achieve precise short-term goals) as the effects tended to be unpredictable or unworkable. Nor was there any intention of returning to the practice of mini-Budgets although the Government would adhere to its policy of a balanced Budget over the medium term.

The Discipline of the ERM

Companies had to understand, continued the Chancellor, that Britain's commitment to a broadly stable exchange rate under the ERM meant that devaluation as a means of bailing out uncompetitive firms was no longer an option. If the costs of British companies rose, orders and jobs would be lost, profits squeezed and companies' futures endangered. 'For business, staying competitive means relating wage rises to what is realistic and justifiable.' There had to be an end to negotiations which took the increase in the retail prices index as representing the minimum rise that could be reasonably expected. However, Mr Major pointed out that sacrifices made by wage-earners should also apply to senior industrialists.

In recent years the average inflation performance of member countries of the ERM had been significantly better than that of other countries. As inflation had come down, the prospects for steady, sustainable growth had improved. Maintaining a broadly stable exchange rate would help British companies to plan and invest with greater certainty about the future. Since the start of the ERM there had been few changes in currency parities and no substantive realignments since the beginning of 1987. Such stability would enable firms to develop their European business strategies and to be well placed for the opportunities of the single market. It should also make Britain even more attractive to inward investors.

The Chancellor believed that the central rate for sterling could be sustained. Britain's export volume and share of world trade in manufactures were both rising. The rate chosen was the recent market rate for sterling and its average real exchange rate over recent years after adjusting for differential inflation performance. Independent analyses also suggested that the rate was sustainable.

Economic and Monetary Union

Finally, Mr Major stressed that, although ERM entry was part of Britain's commitment to stage one of the Delors proposals for economic and monetary union (see p 271, 1989),[1] it did not commit Britain to stages two and three. 'I assure the House that there has been no shift, no weakening in our opposition to the

[1]Stage one involves increased co-ordination of economic and monetary policy within the existing institutional framework, completion of the single European market and all Community countries joining the ERM. Stage two is seen as a transitional stage, during which responsibility for policy would be transferred increasingly from national authorities to new institutions, including a European system of central banks. In stage three exchange rates would become permanently fixed and national currencies replaced by a single currency.

imposition of a single currency and a single monetary authority. ... We believe that our proposals are practical, evolutionary and based on markets and choice. They offer a realistic solution that would enable the 12 to move forward together without risking damaging rifts in the Community. They leave open the possibility of the 'hard' ECU [European Currency Unit – see p 243] evolving towards a parallel currency and then a single currency, but only if that were the wish of governments and peoples. That is subject for ever to the check of the House of Commons.'

Opposition Views

Mr Kinnock said that the Labour Party welcomed Britain's entry into the ERM, but he claimed that the Prime Minister had abandoned her condition that Britain had to bring down its inflation rate before joining. Unemployment, the incidence of bankruptcies and the rate of inflation were all rising, industrial output was falling and recession was threatening. He agreed that the Government was right to forecast a fall in the rate of inflation, but this would come about only at the expense of a 'crude recessionary slump'. This tactic was doomed to failure. In the very act of being applied as an instrument against inflation, recession brought about a rise in living costs and wage demands and imposed extra borrowing costs. These led to bankruptcies, cancelled investment plans, instability and economic underperformance, causing inflation to return later.

If the Government really wanted to encourage enterprise and combat inflation, Mr Kinnock continued, it would end its reliance on high interest rates: it would set these at a more moderate level and institute credit controls. Similarly, if it really wanted to tackle the restraints on the productive economy, it would have followed the example of other ERM member countries by investing more in modern transport, civil research and development, and education and training.

On the hard ECU, Mr Kinnock said that, although this had been advocated by the Chancellor as part of a multiple currency system, it would – being almost incapable of devaluation – render most other currencies redundant.

'The Government's decision and the Government's timing', Mr Kinnock concluded, 'are accurately seen as being determined by political expediency and concern for their own status and not by economic judgment made for the sake of the economy or the national welfare.'

For the Liberal Democrats, Mr Alan Beith said that the result of a division of opinion in the Government was to cloud the issue of whether Britain's currency proposals were a device to bring about a single currency or a means of thwarting such an idea in the future. The Government should make it clear what it intended to do, having joined the ERM. Mr Beith called for a clear commitment to enter the narrow band as soon as possible. The Government should also declare its intentions on fiscal policy – both public expenditure and taxation. If it was not prepared to rule out tax cuts for the time being, it would have to contemplate substantial reductions in public expenditure in order to combat inflation. This would deprive industry of the investment it needed to become more competitive.

The Middle East

Britain's opposition to the continuing Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and Britain's support for Palestinian self-determination were reaffirmed in a parliamentary statement by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, on 24 October.

Britain's views were supported in declarations adopted at the European Council meeting in Rome on 27 and 28 October. The United Nations Security Council on 29 October condemned Iraqi measures against foreign and Kuwaiti citizens and stressed Iraq's liability for loss, damage or injury arising from its actions.

IRAQ'S OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT

Mr Hurd's Statement

Mr Hurd reported to the House of Commons on 24 October (*Hansard*, Vol 178, No 161, cols 335-47) on developments in the Middle East since the emergency parliamentary debate on 6 and 7 September on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (see pp 308-11).

Sanctions

Mr Hurd said that growing pressure had been applied to Iraq through the United Nations. Sanctions were being effectively enforced, in particular by the blockade in the Gulf area involving the constant patrol by more than 100 ships from 12 countries contributing to the multinational force. He added that the Royal Navy had challenged more than 1,100 vessels and had taken part in ten boarding operations.

Compensation

A further UN Security Council resolution was under negotiation to hold Iraq liable to pay compensation for the damage resulting from its actions (see p 381). Noting evidence of brutality, murder and destruction by Iraqi forces in Kuwait, Mr Hurd declared that Iraqis at all levels of military or civilian authority had to be reminded that they were 'personally responsible under the Geneva Convention [see p 311] for illegal acts committed as occupiers in Kuwait'.

Welfare of British Nationals

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary expressed his continuing concern for the welfare of the estimated 800 British people in Iraq and of the British community still in Kuwait. The British embassy in Kuwait, staffed by the ambassador and a colleague, was one of the last diplomatic missions remaining open in the country. It would continue to help British people in Kuwait as long as this was physically and practically possible.

Mr Hurd welcomed the release of some sick and elderly British nationals by Iraq in response to an unofficial humanitarian appeal by the former Prime Minister, Mr Edward Heath.[1] However, he added that it was 'grisly and repulsive that the Iraqis should set about deciding who is so sick and who is so old that

[1] Mr Heath visited Baghdad from 20 to 23 October in a private capacity on behalf of relatives of sick and elderly British hostages, 33 of whom were allowed to leave Iraq.

he or she should be released from a position in which no human being should ever be placed and in which hundreds ... remain'.

Over 900 British women and children had been evacuated from Iraq (see pp 311-12 and 338). Mr Hurd recognised that the situation for the families of British nationals still detained was 'particularly agonising'. However, he blamed the Iraqi President, Mr Saddam Hussein, for the plight of those held hostage and added that 'the British Government and this Parliament would not wish to be blackmailed'.

Need for Iraqi Withdrawal

Mr Hurd said that Saddam Hussein was trying to sow disunity in the coalition of forces from 25 countries ranged against Iraq. He dismissed Iraq's claim to be the champion of the Palestinian cause and criticised the ambivalent response of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to Iraqi aggression (see p 340). He also rejected the idea that Saddam Hussein should be persuaded to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait in exchange for an international conference on the Middle East as a whole. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the other countries of the Gulf and the Government of Kuwait were also opposed to this. Britain's policy remained the complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate Government and the release of the hostages. Pressure on Iraq in the form of diplomatic isolation, the economic blockade and the threat of forcible expulsion from Kuwait would be maintained.

Conclusion

He concluded: 'The Government and the House strongly hope that the restoration of Kuwait will be achieved without further bloodshed, but the daily destruction of Kuwait and the murder of its people continue. We are tightening the screw of the peaceful pressures, but we cannot shirk our part in the alternative course if that course finally becomes necessary.'

European Community Declaration

The European Council, meeting in Rome on 27 and 28 October, expressed concern at the continuing deadlock in the Gulf crisis and at Iraq's persistent violation of international law. The destructive occupation of Kuwait, the oppression and deportation of its population, the holding of foreign hostages and the violation of diplomatic conventions could not be tolerated. The Community sought a solution based on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Foreign Nationals in Iraq and Kuwait

The European Council demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of the legitimate Kuwaiti Government and the release of all foreign citizens who wished to leave Iraq and Kuwait. The holding of foreign nationals as hostages and their detention at strategic sites in Iraq were condemned. The Council reminded the Iraqi Government of its international obligations in this respect and of its responsibility for the safety of foreign citizens. Iraq's use of such citizens in an effort to divide the international community was denounced as a manoeuvre 'in contempt of the most basic humanitarian rules'.

Community member states would not send government representatives in any capacity to negotiate with Iraq for the release of foreign hostages and would discourage others from doing so. The UN Secretary-General was urged to send a special representative to Iraq to seek the immediate departure of all hostages.

The European Council demanded that diplomats accredited to Kuwait who were being prevented from leaving Iraq should be allowed unhindered departure in accordance with the Vienna Convention (see p 311).

Conclusion

Concluding, the Council expressed satisfaction at the degree of the international community's consensus over the crisis. This needed to be preserved in order to achieve a peaceful solution. Community member states would adhere strictly to measures decided upon by the Security Council against Iraq and were prepared to consider additional steps consistent with the UN Charter.

United Nations Security Council Resolution

A further Security Council resolution on the Gulf crisis was approved on 29 October by 13 votes to 0 (Yemen and Cuba abstaining). Resolution 674 (1990) demanded that the Iraqi authorities and occupying forces desist from taking third state nationals as hostages and from mistreating those nationals and Kuwaiti citizens. Such actions were in breach of Security Council decisions and international conventions.

The resolution invited states to collate substantiated information on human rights violations by Iraq and to make this information available to the Council. The demand that Iraq fulfil its obligations to third state nationals and permit their departure from Kuwait and Iraq was reaffirmed. Access to food, water and basic services necessary for the protection and well-being of Kuwaiti and third state nationals, including diplomats, should be ensured by Iraq.

The resolution further demanded that Iraq protect diplomatic and consular personnel and premises in Kuwait and Iraq and that it rescind its orders for the closure of diplomatic missions in Kuwait and the withdrawal of the immunity of their personnel. Iraq was reminded that it was liable under international law for 'any loss, damage or injury arising in regard to Kuwait and third states, and their nationals and corporations, as a result of the invasion and illegal occupation of Kuwait by Iraq'. States were invited to collect relevant information regarding their claims for restitution or financial compensation by Iraq.

Concluding, the resolution encouraged the UN Secretary-General to pursue diplomatic efforts in order to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis on the basis of previous Security Council resolutions.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Britain's Views

In his parliamentary statement on 24 October, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the killing of Palestinians by Israeli security forces on

Temple Mount in Jerusalem on 8 October (see p 341) and the later murder of Israelis underlined the tragedy of the Arab-Israeli dispute. He hoped that Israel might yet agree to accept the UN Secretary-General's mission to investigate the killings.[1] To do otherwise would risk diverting the Security Council from the task of expelling Iraq from Kuwait.

Mr Hurd reaffirmed Britain's belief in the right to Palestinian self-determination. This would have to be respected as part of a comprehensive and negotiated settlement, which would also have to include provision for the security of Israel.

[1]UN Security Council resolution 673 (1990), unanimously adopted on 24 October, deplored the Israeli Government's refusal to receive the UN Secretary-General's mission and urged that it reconsider its decision.

European Community Statement

In a declaration on the Middle East issued at the Rome summit, the European Council reaffirmed its support for the convening of an international peace conference, at the appropriate time, to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem. The European Council supported UN Security Council resolutions 672 and 673 against Israel (see p 341) and acknowledged the role to be played by the United Nations in protecting the rights of the Palestinians. Israel was urged to meet its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians (see p 311) and to co-operate with the United Nations. The violence committed by both sides in Jerusalem showed that the status quo in the Occupied Territories was unsustainable.

Chancellor's Mansion House Speech

A continuation of tight monetary and fiscal policies to tackle inflation was promised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr John Major, in his speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet for Bankers and Merchants of the City of London at the Mansion House on 18 October. He also pointed out that Britain's membership of the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System did not indicate support for a single European currency. However, the Government was considering an issue of bonds denominated in European Currency Units.

British Economy

The Chancellor said that British economic policy in 1990 had been dominated by the struggle to contain inflationary pressures. These had been evident in the large deficit on the current account of the balance of payments and in the recorded rate of inflation itself. 'The cause of the problem was excess demand.' The remedy was a firm monetary policy, which was now clearly working.

Sterling membership of the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) of the European Monetary System (see pp 338-9 and 378-80) added an extra dimension to monetary discipline, but would require tough action in the short term to ensure low inflation thereafter. Notwithstanding an improved prospect for inflation, further reductions in interest rates (which had been cut by one percentage point at the time of ERM entry) would be made only when it was clearly safe to do so.

The slowing in the pace of economic activity, Mr Major explained, meant a fall in the large cyclical Budget surpluses. The rapid increase in corporation tax receipts had ended for the time being. An economic slowdown also meant renewed pressures on public expenditure, which might no longer fall as a proportion of gross domestic product. 'But I do not believe we should change our medium-term objective of a balanced Budget', the Chancellor declared. 'That would not make sense.'

Summarising, he recognised the problems of 1990 and did not promise that 1991 would be an easy year either. The Government would continue to need tight monetary and fiscal policies, while its commitment to the ERM would reinforce that discipline on both industry and government itself. 'But we will, I am sure, begin to see the benefits in a substantial fall in inflation. That will be important progress. And with inflation back under control, British business will be well placed to take advantage of the enormous opportunities which our policies have created.'

Europe

Mr Major said that Britain's proposals for a European Monetary Fund and a 'hard' European Currency Unit (ECU – see pp 242-3) amounted to an evolutionary approach, based on market forces and choice. They recognised that economic convergence in the European Community was far from satisfactory. This could be seen in differences in inflation rates, in short-term interest rates, in public sector surpluses and deficits and in degrees of economic flexibility. He stressed that membership of the ERM did not commit Britain to the idea of a single European currency. The Chancellor said that, under the British proposals, the hard ECU could ultimately evolve towards a single currency if it were the wish of governments and peoples that this should circulate in preference to national currencies. But an immediate decision was neither necessary nor desirable.

The Government was seeking practical ways in which the use of ECUs could be developed. In 1988 it had launched a programme of ECU Treasury Bills (see p 347, 1988). The London International Financial Futures Exchange had subsequently introduced an interest rate contract denominated in ECUs. Mr Major was now considering an ECU bond issue. This would further demonstrate Britain's attachment to the ECU and would strengthen London's important position in this rapidly growing market. The Government also supported the proposal that member states' contributions to the European Regional Development Fund should be denominated in ECUs.

Britain's commitment to Europe was also shown by its support for the nations of Eastern Europe and the conviction that they should have the opportunity to join the European Community. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (see p 209) would be an important means of assisting in the emergence of market economies in those countries. The choice of London as the Bank's location was a tribute to the City's unique experience in finance and privatisation.

Concluding, the Chancellor said that he looked forward to the 1990s as the decade in which Britain would make further improvements in its economic

performance; in which it would continue to play a leading role in creating an open and liberal European Community; and in which London would consolidate its position as the financial centre of Europe.

International Research Comparisons

The Science and Engineering Research Council has published the first volume of a report which compares the main features of research and development undertaken in 1987 in Britain, France and the then Federal Republic of Germany.

The report[1] is based largely on national sources of statistics. The data are for 1987, the latest year for which figures are generally available. Cost comparisons mostly use market exchange rates. The report points out that the alternative, purchasing power parities (which take into account purchasing differences between countries) are not based specifically on the cost of research and development.

The report summarises the organisation of public research and development (R & D) in the three countries. In Britain, it says, policy formation, funding and performance are all dispersed, the main public sector agencies being the universities and defence establishments. There is no single ministry of research. By contrast, in France there is a strong ministry of research, strong central control, and much applied research conducted in strong public research laboratories on which academics depend. The then Federal Republic of Germany had the major features of both systems, a powerful ministry of research and a dispersed independent university system, well supported for research. In addition, it had a whole range of powerful research establishments and institutes, most of them largely independent of government control.

In introducing the statistical material, the report concludes that the total expenditure on R & D of all types in Britain was substantially below that in the Federal Republic of Germany (and, of the British total, much was for defence development). It also notes that in Britain public expenditure on civil research was lower than in the other two countries; and that German industry funded more research than British industry. A selection of the quoted statistics is given in the table.

[1] *Research in the United Kingdom, France and West Germany: A Comparison.* Science and Engineering Research Council. Available from SERC, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1ET. Volume 1, £10. ISBN 1 870669 81 9.

Shorter Notes

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

In a statement on local government finance to the House of Commons on 31 October, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Chris Patten, confirmed the Government's broad proposals contained in his announcement of 19 July (see pp 285-6). He also confirmed that the system of safety nets (a form of central government support designed to protect people in areas where the ending of cross subsidies under the old rating system had led to large changes) would be abolished. It

Statistics of R & D Support in Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1987

	Britain	France	Federal Republic of Germany
All R & D			
Expenditure (£'000 million)	9·7	12·8	19·0
at purchasing power parities (£'000 million)	9·7	10·1	13·4
as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)	2·34	2·42	2·82
Support staff per full-time equivalent (FTE) researcher	1·20	1·55	1·77
Expenditure per FTE researcher (£'000)	73	111	128
R & D in industry			
Expenditure (£'000 million)	6·3	7·1	13·4
as a percentage of GDP	1·53	1·35	2·00
Support staff per FTE researcher	1·11	1·92	1·94
Expenditure per FTE researcher (£'000)	73	145	144
R & D in the public sector			
Expenditure (£'000 million)	3·1	5·0	4·9
as a percentage of GDP	0·75	0·94	0·74
Support staff per FTE researcher	1·36	1·24	1·46
Expenditure per FTE researcher (£'000)	73	83	99
R & D in higher education institutions			
Expenditure (£'000 million)	1·3	1·0	2·4
as a percentage of GDP	0·32	0·20	0·35
Support staff per FTE researcher	1·02	0·51	1·34
Expenditure per FTE researcher (£'000)	48	36	80

Note: Sterling equivalents are at market exchange rates unless otherwise specified.

would be replaced by another form of central government support – area protection grant. The business rate in England in 1991-92 would be set at 38·6p in the pound, the increase over 1990-91 being in line with the rate of inflation.

The proposed financial settlement gave local authorities scope to increase their spending by 7 per cent above 1990-91 levels. The community charge in England appropriate to local authorities' standard spending assessment (SSA – the Government's estimate of how much it should cost to provide a standard level of service) would be £380. 'If authorities are extravagant, or if they are inefficient in collecting community charges, they may have to set charges at levels higher than that, but efficient authorities which spend within their SSAs will be able to set charges significantly lower than the community charge for standard spending. Authorities receiving help from the area protection grant should also have lower charges.'

Mr Patten outlined provisional criteria for capping local authorities' excessive budgets or excessive annual increases in budgets. An increase of over 9 per cent would be considered excessive if it gave rise to a budget which then exceeded the SSA. An increase of over 7 per cent would be considered excessive if it gave rise to a budget which then exceeded the SSA by more than 5 per cent. An increase of over 5 per cent would be considered excessive if it gave rise to a budget which then exceeded the SSA by more than 10 per cent. Finally, any budget over 12·5 per cent above the SSA would be considered excessive. Authorities with budgets of under £15 million would be exempt from capping.

The Government intended to introduce a simplified community charge Bill which would, among other things, improve accountability and provide more generous transitional arrangements for the rating of small businesses where the owner lived on the premises.

Also in the House of Commons on 31 October, the Secretary of State for Wales, Mr David Hunt, announced a proposed business rate in Wales in 1991-92 of 40·8p in the pound.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 178, No 166, cols 987-91 and written answers, col 551.

CREDIT CARDS

Orders to end credit card companies' 'No Discrimination' rules and certain restrictions on merchant acquisition were laid before Parliament by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs, Mr John Redwood, on 1 November. Announcing the Orders, Mr Redwood said that they implemented the Government's decisions on the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on credit card services (see pp 355–6, 1989).

From 7 March 1991 traders would no longer have to charge cash customers the same price as those paying by credit card. Credit card companies would be free to limit traders' price differentials to the charge levied on the trader by the merchant acquirer, at present less than 2 per cent on average. The Government was making provision to ensure that any differential pricing was clearly indicated to the consumer. From 28 February 1991 it would be unlawful for payment card organisations to require payment cards to be issued before an authorised person might act as a merchant acquirer.

Mr Redwood said that the changes should lead to a fairer deal for the majority of shoppers and also allow more banks and other financial institutions to come into the credit card business and thus enhance competition.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 178, No 167 (Part II), written answers, cols 780–1.

TRAINING

On 10 October the Secretary of State for Employment, Mr Michael Howard, announced that the network of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) had been completed two years ahead of schedule. On 5 November he launched Investors in People, a new initiative aimed at making training a key part of company plans.

The role of the TECs (see pp 429-33, 1988, and pp 152 and 470-1, 1989) is to manage local training programmes for the unemployed, young people and the business community, to stimulate enterprise and to build better links between industry and education.[1] Their introduction was proposed in a White Paper published on 5 December 1988, at which time it was anticipated that the network would be developed over a period of three to four years.

Mr Howard said, however, that all 82 TECs needed for England and Wales[2] had now been established. Of these, 31 were fully operational and another 51 were in development. He noted that in north-east England all the TECs were in operation. The speed with which such a change in training structures had been implemented made him confident that British employers would be able to produce a world-class workforce.

The Secretary of State said that the TEC movement would radically change the management of training in Britain. It would provide local solutions for the needs of people and industries, while British industry would be given the central role in tackling skills shortages. TECs would have the flexibility to pioneer new ways of encouraging people to train – for example, a Training Credits scheme that would be pioneered by 11 TECs from April 1991 (see p 142). 'The effects of this dramatic change in the way [the] Government funds training and stimulates enterprise will be felt into the next century. Business leaders now clearly recognise the significance of a skilled workforce for the country's economic success. ... I am delighted by their response.'

Speaking on 5 November at the annual conference of the Confederation of British Industry, the Secretary of State launched the Investors in People scheme. He said that there were four key elements to the award of Investors in People certification to an organisation. To qualify it would have to:

[1]For further information on TECs see COI reference paper *Training Policy in Britain*, No 330/90.

[2]For training and enterprise arrangements in Scotland see pp 75-6 and 270.

1 make a public commitment to develop employees to meet business objectives;

2 review regularly the training needs of all employees;

3 take action to train people not only on recruitment but throughout their employment; and

4 evaluate investment in training against business objectives.

Mr Howard said that the standard had been developed by business people, based on what the best businesses did. Training brought both direct and indirect benefits. He would not be happy, he said, 'until training appears in the business plan of every firm in the country and is scrutinised at boardroom level as carefully as any other investment'.

Sources: Department of Employment news releases, 10.10.90 and 5.11.90.

NUTRITIONAL LABELLING OF FOODS

The Government has announced agreement on a European Community directive which will standardise nutritional labelling of foods.

Making the announcement, Mr David Maclean, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said that the directive laid down the statutory format for nutritional information on food labels. It provided for a two-stage approach. Information about energy, protein, carbohydrates and fat would be given in the first stage, to come into effect in three years. Information about sugar, sodium, saturates and fibre would be given in the second stage, to come into effect two years later. Giving information would be voluntary, although when given it would have to be comprehensive and in the agreed format. Where a nutrition claim was made, such information would be compulsory.

The directive requires that trade in products complying with the directive be permitted by 1 April 1992. Trade in products not complying with the agreed format of the directive would be prohibited from 1 October 1993.

Mr Maclean said that the Government would make the necessary changes to food labelling legislation in Britain (see pp 145-7). It would also actively encourage the British food industry to provide comprehensive nutrition information, as already outlined in government guidelines on nutritional labelling of food.

Sources: *Hansard*, Vol 177, No 158, written answers, cols 913-14; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food news release, 18.10.90.

WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Government has announced that it proposes to transfer the water and sewerage functions of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland to a government-owned company by 1 October 1992.

Making the announcement in the House of Commons on 1 November, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Peter Brooke, said that the Government was committed to improving the quality of drinking water in line with European Community standards and to protecting the environment (see pp 358-61). The Government believed that the transfer of the water service to a commercially oriented water company would enable those aims to be met in the most cost-effective way. It would also safeguard the interests of ratepayers and metered water consumers. The separation of water and sewerage services from the Department would facilitate effective regulatory regimes.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 178, No 167, written answers, cols 638-9.

LONDON'S RAIL SERVICES

Government approval for the East-West Crossrail scheme, which would link Paddington station in west London and Liverpool Street station in east London, was announced on 9 October by the Secretary of State for Transport, Mr Cecil Parkinson. In addition, the route of the proposed line from Chelsea (south-west London) to Hackney (north-east London) is to be 'safeguarded' through the planning system.

These decisions stem from work put in hand by Mr Parkinson in November 1989 following his announcement of approval for the proposed £1,000 million extension of the Jubilee Line from central London to Stratford (east London). This work was based on the findings of the Central London Rail Study, published in January 1989 (see p 65, 1989).

The East-West Crossrail, if authorised in a private Bill expected to be deposited in Parliament in November 1991, would cost £1,400 million at 1990 prices. The scheme envisages a 6m (19ft) diameter dual tunnel from Paddington to Liverpool Street, with possible intermediate stations at Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road and Farringdon. The line would be fed by services from Aylesbury (Buckinghamshire) and Reading (Berkshire) in the west and from Southend (Essex), via Stratford, in the east. It would open in 1999. It is proposed that the line would be operated jointly by British Rail and London Underground and would be capable of use by trains of both systems.

Mr Parkinson said that it would not be possible to build both the East-West Crossrail and the Chelsea-Hackney line simultaneously. Major investment was already being undertaken by British Rail and London Underground, and the disruption in central London caused by building two lines at the same time would be unacceptable.

The decision to safeguard the Chelsea-Hackney line through the planning system means that the option to proceed with the line at a later date will remain open. Safeguarding the line will require that London Transport would have to be consulted if any planning applications were to be submitted

that would have an effect upon the safeguarded alignment.

The Secretary of State said that, together with the additions to the Docklands Light Railway currently under construction and the proposed Jubilee Line extension that was being considered by Parliament, the present decisions created a long-term programme to increase the capacity of London's rail system. 'This strategy should serve to maintain and strengthen London's position as one of the world's foremost financial and commercial centres, to the benefit of the economy as a whole.'

Source: Department of Transport news release, 9.10.90.

LINK

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) announced on 22 October that the LINK scheme was being reviewed by the independent consultants Segal Quince Wicksteed. The LINK Steering Group commissioned the review to address concerns that projects were not getting under way quickly enough. Its aims are:

– to determine whether the LINK objectives are being achieved;

– to assess whether the operating guidelines and criteria for LINK are working effectively; and

– to consider whether LINK programme management and procedures can be improved.

The review started on 8 October and the consultants are to report by the end of 1990.

At the same time the DTI announced a new LINK programme. Called the Advanced Rotorcraft programme, the government half of the funding is being provided jointly over three years by the DTI (£0·9 million) and the Ministry of Defence (£1·5 million). It aims at developing technologies which will improve rotorcraft safety, noise and efficiency. These areas are fundamental to the longer-term success of civil helicopters and other rotorcraft and will add to the effectiveness of military vehicles. More than 20 companies and academic institutions have expressed interest in participating in the programme.

The LINK scheme, which is designed to bridge the gap between scientific research and commercial applications of its results by promoting collaboration between industry and publicly funded scientists, was launched in December 1986 (see pp 29-30, 1987). The first five programmes were approved in January 1988 (see pp 70-1, 1988) and the present one brings the total number to 25.

Sources: DTI news releases, 22.10.90.

World Climate Conference

The Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, addressed the second World Climate Conference in Geneva on 6 November. She called for the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to be taken as a sign-post in the negotiation of a framework convention on climate change. European Community environment and energy ministers, meeting in Luxembourg on 29 October, agreed that the European Community would aim to stabilise the Community's carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000.

The conference was attended by 137 countries. The ministerial declaration adopted at the conference gives strong support to the conclusion reached by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC – see pp 222-3) that human activities are substantially increasing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. It also agrees that a framework convention on climate change should be negotiated in time for adoption in June 1992.

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

Mrs Thatcher said that the danger of global warming was as yet unseen, but was still 'real enough for us to make changes and sacrifices, so that we do not live at the expense of future generations'. The need for different countries to work together to stop damage to the environment would be a great test of their ability to act as a world community.

Research

The Prime Minister said that, for two centuries, mankind had assumed that the world would continue much the same whatever the level of economic progress or the increase in population. Now, however, it had been recognised that mankind had cared too little for the seas, the forests and the land: 'we must remember our duty to nature before it is too late... it will weigh on our shoulders for as long as we wish to dwell on a living and thriving planet'.

The United Nations, she said, had done important work to advance scientific understanding of climate change. In particular, the IPCC report was a remarkable achievement. However, it had been careful to point out that one could not yet be certain that human activities were increasing global average temperatures. The total amount of carbon dioxide reaching the atmosphere each year from natural sources, for example, was some 600,000 million tonnes, while the figure resulting from human activities was only some 26,000 million tonnes.

The world had seen great climatic changes over the centuries, Mrs Thatcher continued, and consequently global climate change within limits need not pose serious problems. However, real dangers arose because climate change was being combined with other problems, such as population growth, the deterioration of soil fertility, the intensive use of fossil fuels and the destruction of the world's forests. Britain would continue to play a leading role in research on the remaining uncertainties. For this purpose, the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research had been established earlier in 1990 (see p 223).

Precautionary Action

The need for further research, Mrs Thatcher continued, could not be used as an excuse for delaying much-needed action. There was already a clear case for precautionary action at an international level. According to the IPCC, the earth would warm up faster than at any time since the last ice age. As a result, she said, rising seas could threaten the livelihood of people living near coasts, forests could die, deserts could advance and some species of animals and plants could migrate elsewhere or disappear completely.

Many sensible precautions could be taken, such as:

- improving energy efficiency and using energy prudently;
- developing alternative and sustainable sources of supply;
- replanting forests that were consumed; and
- tackling waste.

Mrs Thatcher saw the adoption of such policies as 'a sort of premium on insurance against fire, flood or other disaster. It may be cheaper or more cost-effective to take action now than to wait and find we have to pay much more later.'

International Co-operation on a Framework Convention

The Prime Minister said that a structure of international environmental co-operation had already been established to deal with the problems of ozone depletion, culminating in June 1990 in the London agreement to phase out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs – see pp 256-8). Although that agreement focused on the protection of the ozone layer, it would, she

said, have consequences for the climate. Molecule for molecule, CFCs were 10,000 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as agents of global warming.

Carbon dioxide did, however, contribute about half the man-made greenhouse warming, and was produced by all countries. A joint international effort to curb greenhouse gases in general and carbon dioxide in particular was vital. There was little point in action to reduce emissions in one part of the world if they were being increased elsewhere. Britain was prepared, as part of an international effort, to set itself the target of returning carbon dioxide emissions to their 1990 levels by 2005. This would mean reversing a rising trend before that date. Measures that Britain was taking included:

- requiring by law that a substantial portion of electricity would come from sources emitting little or no carbon dioxide;
- implementing energy efficiency programmes;
- replanting an ancient English forest (see pp 352-3); and
- aiming to increase funds for tropical forestry by £100 million, and supporting more than 150 projects in 30 countries.

Mrs Thatcher said that the immediate task of the conference was to involve as many countries as possible in the negotiation of a framework convention on climate change. The work of the IPCC should be taken as a sign-post, 'and the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organisation as the principal vehicles for reaching our destination'. It was important to recognise the benefits of economic growth, as this would generate the wealth needed for the protection of the environment. It would not be prudent to adopt policies that would bankrupt industrialised countries or doom poorer ones to increasing poverty. Instead, the different circumstances facing different countries should be recognised. The better-off nations should help the less well-off, as was agreed for ozone protection measures under the Montreal Protocol.

To keep the balance between mankind and nature, it would be necessary to work together for the environment. 'The United Kingdom will work with all of you ... in this cause – to save our common inheritance for generations yet to come.'

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

The conference unanimously agreed a declaration giving strong support to the IPCC conclusion that human activities are substantially increasing the atmospheric concentrations of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide, methane, CFCs and nitrous oxide, and that these increases will result in additional warming of the earth's surface. Agreement was reached that all nations should contribute to an international effort to tackle the problem, and that developed countries should provide financial support to developing countries to help meet the extra cost of taking measures to tackle climate change. This closely followed the similar agreement at the London meeting of the parties to the Montreal Convention, which provides for financial support to help developing countries take measures to protect the ozone layer.

It was also agreed that a key objective should be to negotiate a framework convention on climate change in time for it to be ratified at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to be held in June 1992. There was a clear recognition of an immediate need to take measures on a precautionary basis, so that the problem should not worsen in the time that it takes scientists to resolve the remaining uncertainties.

The declaration recognises that the member states of the European Community have adopted targets for emissions of greenhouse gases, as have ten out of the 12 other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations. It calls on other developed countries to draw up targets or strategies that would have a significant impact on their greenhouse emissions.

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

The European Community Environment Council, meeting in Luxembourg on 29 October, reached agreement on a Community position for the climate change conference. It was agreed to adopt the goal of stabilising the Community's total carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. It was recognised that certain member states were not able to adopt such a target in their own national programmes – which would enable Britain to plan for stabilisation in 2005. It was also agreed that the European Commission would bring forward, in good time for the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, plans for the reduction, by about 2005-2010, of emissions of carbon dioxide and similar gases. Economic and fiscal instruments, such as taxes, had an important role to play in bringing about structural changes in the energy sector with a view to reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Noise Review

The Government has welcomed the report of the Noise Review Working Party 1990, which was published on 18 October. Introducing the report, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, said that excessive noise was a concern to a great many people, and that the report would play a very important part in influencing future policy to combat noise pollution.

An adjournment debate on the subject of noise abatement and the environment was held in the House of Commons on 31 October.

The working party was set up on 15 February and was asked to consider aspects of noise control, with particular reference to the Control of Pollution Act 1974 (see pp 282-5 and 303, 1974).[1] It included representatives from local authorities and research es-

[1]For Britain's present system of noise abatement see COI reference paper *Control of Noise Pollution in Britain*, No 227/88.

tablishments, and people with special knowledge of noise problems. The working party did not examine noise from defence establishments or in the workplace, because these are controlled separately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report[1] makes recommendations in a number of fields. Some of these have already been implemented by the Government, and others are under consideration.

Planning and Noise

The report recommends that a revision of the current planning circular on noise should be undertaken as quickly as possible, to consider noise from helicopters, railways, sporting activities, entertainments and recreation. It should also distinguish between industrial noise from fixed installations and noise from mineral workings and waste disposal sites. There should be a requirement that all planning applications, other than for housing, include information about the noise implications of what is proposed. 'Action levels' should be established as guidelines to assist authorities responsible for assessing proposals for noise-sensitive developments. Controls under section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act should be extended to mineral workings, waste disposal sites and oil and gas installations.

Neighbourhood Noise

The report suggests that the Control of Pollution Act be amended so as to require local authorities to take steps to investigate complaints from the public about neighbourhood noise. Consideration should be given to the creation of an offence of permitting the use of premises for a purpose giving rise to a noise nuisance. The report says that members of the working party considered the idea of creating a new offence of making deliberate, sustained and excessive noise. However, they felt that problems of definition would probably mean that courts would in practice be obliged to apply the concept of nuisance in such cases. Their efforts had therefore been concentrated on making sure that nuisance provisions in the existing legislation could be applied as widely as necessary. Local authorities should be encouraged to take steps to ensure that an environmental health officer is available out of hours to deal with noise complaints. Priority should be given to an examination of the possibility of setting up Neighbourhood Noise Watch schemes.

Transport Noise

The report recommends research to establish whether the current criteria for noise insulation grant remain appropriate given the changes in social attitudes in recent years; such a study should also include an examination of whether the grant should become payable in respect of noise from new railways as well as from new roads. Consideration should be given to setting up a sliding scale for eligibility for noise insulation work, based on percentages of the full cost; this would benefit householders whose properties just fail to qualify for grant under the present rules. The extension of existing compensation rights to cover householders affected by the implementation of a permanent traffic management scheme should also be considered.

Railway Noise

Railway developments should become subject to similar controls as road developments, and publicly available environmental assessments should have to be included in the private Bill or other procedure for considering proposed railway lines. Consideration should be given to extending the regulations about insulation of residential property to include householders affected by the significant intensification of use of a railway where this could not reasonably have been foreseen.

Aircraft Noise

In general, the report takes the view that aircraft noise should continue to be controlled by aviation law rather than pollution law. However, flights of small aircraft should no longer be exempted from the nuisance abatement provisions of the Control of Pollution Act. Consideration should be given to involving local authorities in the monitoring and control of airfield noise, and to giving them licensing controls to regulate the use of helicopters at private landing sites. The present noise index used to measure aircraft noise should be replaced by a different measure incorporating separate indices for times of day and night and which would provide information about the maximum noise levels experienced. The possibility should be examined of a 'noise levy' on airline passengers, to fund noise control measures and sound insulation near airports.

Audible Alarms

The report recommends that the provisions of the current code of practice for intruder alarms, which state that alarms should sound for no more than 20 minutes, should become mandatory. The current British Standard for alarms should be revised in the light of recent technological improvement; it, too, should become mandatory. The statutory period for which car alarms are allowed to sound should be reduced to 30 seconds from five minutes. Consideration should be given to the introduction of mandatory standards for the design and installation of car alarms and to the creation of a fixed-penalty offence when a car alarm sounds beyond the statutory period.

Entertainment Noise

The report advocates the provision of guidance by the Home Office and the Department of the Environment to police and local authority staff. This would ensure that they are fully informed about current legislation and their respective roles in dealing with events such as 'acid house' parties (commercially run parties, usually unlicensed and therefore illegal, which feature very loud music and which often last for many hours). Consideration should be given to extending the powers of local authorities to take action against everyone involved in organising an unlicensed event. A scheme should also be examined to improve co-operation between the police and organisers of legal commercially run parties.

[1] *Report of the Noise Review Working Party 1990.* HMSO, £7·20. ISBN 0 11 752343 7.

Noise within Buildings

The building regulations covering the conversion of flats out of existing houses should make provision for the highest possible standards of noise insulation; the standard should be as close as possible to those for new buildings. Research should be undertaken to develop an accurate and simple test of whether a building achieves a reasonable level of sound insulation.

Codes of Practice

The report recommends that codes of practice should be used as a means of controlling noise by providing guidance and advice. Work should proceed as quickly as possible on codes covering clay pigeon shooting, audible bird scarers, pop concerts and motor cycle scrambling.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr Heathcoat-Amory said that the report was the most thorough review of noise control since the passage of the 1974 Act. The risk of exposure to noise was increasing, as people travelled more, owned more equipment and used more machinery. At the same time, the means to measure and control it was also better. 'Both the challenge and the opportunity are there for us to improve our procedures ... the report contains a wide range of recommendations, ... [which] will all be seriously considered.'

The Government was satisfied, he continued, that, on the basis of current knowledge, adequate controls existed to ensure that levels of noise did not threaten people's health. It was, however, concerned to reduce levels of noise that posed a nuisance. It had accepted some of the report's specific recommendations, including:

- a pilot 'quiet neighbourhood' scheme;
- changes to the index for measuring aircraft noise;
- mandatory controls for burglar alarms;
- extension of building regulations to require noise insulation in converted flats;
- revisions to the planning circular on noise to take account of potentially noisy development activities; and
- clarification of local authorities' duties to investigate noise complaints.

Mr Heathcoat-Amory said that the feasibility of measuring vehicle noise in the 'MoT test' (the annual test of a vehicle's roadworthiness) is being considered, as are new offences of allowing buildings and open spaces to be used for noisy entertainment. Many of the other suggestions contained in the report were also being considered. The Department of the Environment would continue to sponsor a comprehensive programme of research on noise, which would include all the topics suggested in the report for further research. The Department of Transport would consider whether to extend its current programme of research on transport noise to include the formulation of a common measurement for noise from all the main forms of transport. In conclusion, he said that the Government would make a further statement in summer 1991 on the progress of its deliberations on noise.

HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE

Noise abatement was discussed in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on 31 October (*Hansard*, Vol 178, No 166, cols 1023-77).

Opening the debate, the Minister for the Environment and Countryside, Mr David Trippier, described noise as a form of pollution that could be an 'insidious, all-pervading cause of enormous stress'. There had been several recent initiatives on noise, including:

- improvements in noise control in the Environmental Protection Bill (see pp 81-4 and 394-5);
- the White Paper on the environment (see pp 358-61), which devoted a whole chapter to noise; and
- the report of the Noise Review Working Party.

Mr Trippier said that, under the terms of the Environmental Protection Bill, the maximum penalty for breaching a noise abatement order would rise from £2,000 to £20,000. The definition of a statutory nuisance had been widened to include noise prejudicial to health, and the duty of local authorities to investigate noise had been clarified. He added that, although the Government remained committed to tackling noise, action by community groups and ordinary people was also needed: 'every individual in the land has a responsibility to see that unnecessary noise is avoided'.

Social Security Benefits

Increases in social security benefits were announced in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for Social Security, Mr Tony Newton, on 24 October.

The new rates, which will come into force in the week beginning 8 April 1991, reflect a rise in the retail prices index of 10·9 per cent recorded for the year to September 1990. Child benefit for the first child in a family is being increased and extra help is being given to old people and disabled people.

Social security benefits fall into two main categories – contributory and non-contributory. Contributory benefits are paid from the National Insurance Fund, which consists of contributions from employed people and their employers, self-employed people and the Government. Non-contributory benefits are financed from general taxation revenue. Some non-contributory benefits are income-related while others, such as child benefit, are not.

INCREASED BENEFITS

Retirement Pension

A contributory state retirement pension is payable to women at the age of 60 and to men at the age of 65. The weekly pension for a single person is being increased from £46·90 to £52 and that for a couple from £75·10 to £83·25, rises of 10·9 per cent. The non-contributory retirement pension of £28·20 a

week goes up to £31·25; this is payable to people over 80 who have not qualified for a contributory pension. People whose pensions do not give them enough to live on may be entitled to income support, which in 1991 will range from £13·75 to £18·45 a week for a single person and from £20·90 to £26·20 a week for a couple.

Mothers and Children

Under the statutory maternity pay scheme, women who leave employment to have a baby receive their maternity pay directly from the employer. This will rise from £39·25 to £44·50 a week. Women who are ineligible for maternity pay may qualify for National Insurance maternity allowance; this is being increased from £35·70 to £40·60 a week.

The main social security benefit for children is the non-contributory tax-free child benefit, which is normally paid to the mother. At present the benefit is £7·25 a week per child; in 1991 the amount paid for the first child in a family will increase by £1 a week and will remain at £7·25 for each of the other children.

Widows

The various pensions for widows are being increased by 10·9 per cent. The allowance for a widowed mother with a young family increases from £46·90 a week to £52; the payment for each child increases from £9·65 to £10·70 a week. A widow's pension of £46·90 a week (to be increased to £52) is payable to a widow who is 45 years or over when her husband dies or when entitlement to widowed mother's allowance ends. The higher rate of widow's pension under the industrial death benefit scheme also increases from £46·90 to £52 a week and the lower rate from £14·07 to £15·60 a week.

Sick and Disabled People

Sick Pay

There are a number of benefits for people unable to work because of sickness or disablement. Employers are responsible for paying statutory sick pay of between £39·25 and £52·50 a week; the lower rate is being increased to £43·50 and the upper limit remains the same. There are additions for wives and children. Employees not entitled to statutory sick pay can claim state sickness benefit of £35·70 a week, as can self-employed people; this is being raised to £39·60.

Invalidity Benefits

Once statutory sick pay or sickness benefit ends, National Insurance invalidity pension is payable if the beneficiary is still incapable of working. This is being increased from £46·90 a week to £52; there are additions for adult dependants and children. An invalidity allowance of up to £10 a week (to be increased to £11·10) may be paid with the pension to people who become sick more than five years before minimum retirement age.

A basic severe disablement allowance of £28·20 a week (to be increased to £31·25) may be payable to people of working age who are unable to work and who do not qualify for National Insurance invalidity pension. In December 1990 up to £10 a week extra in age-related benefits will be payable to the 100,000 people receiving the severe disablement allowance. This will rise to £11·10 in April 1991.

Industrial Injuries Benefits

Various benefits are payable for disablement caused by an accident at work or a prescribed disease. Disablement benefit of up to £76·60 a week (to be increased to £84·90) is payable after a qualifying period of 15 weeks if a person is physically or mentally disabled as a result of an industrial accident or disease.

Other Benefits

A non-contributory, tax-free attendance allowance of £37·55 or £25·05 a week is payable to severely disabled people depending upon the amount of attention they require. This is being increased to £41·65 and £27·80. A non-contributory invalid care allowance of £28·20 a week (to be increased to £31·25) may be payable to men and women aged between 16 and pension age who cannot take up paid employment because they are caring for a person receiving attendance allowance. The amount which can be earned by a carer without affecting entitlement to the care allowance is being increased from £20 to £30 a week.

Physically disabled people unable or virtually unable to walk may be entitled to a tax-free mobility allowance of £26·25 a week – to be increased to £29·10 – to help with transport costs. People aged between 5 and 66 may claim for this allowance, and payment can continue up to the age of 80. In the light of two recent cases, the regulations are to be modified to ensure payment of mobility allowance to people suffering the amputation of both legs.

Unemployment Benefit

Contributory unemployment benefit of £37·35 a week for a single person is being increased to £41·40 and benefit for a couple from £60·40 to £66·95. It is payable for up to a year in any one period of unemployment.

Income Support

Income support is payable to people who are not in work, or who work for less than 24 hours a week, and whose financial resources are below certain set levels. The personal allowance for a single person or lone parent aged under 18 is being increased from £21·90 to £23·65 a week. The allowance for a couple rises from £57·60 to £62·25 if one or both are over 18. There are additional sums for families, single parents, pensioners and long-term sick and disabled people.

Family Credit

Family credit is payable to working families on modest incomes with children. The amount depends on a family's net income (excluding child benefit) and the number and ages of children in the family. A maximum rate, consisting of an adult rate of £36·35 a week (to be increased to £38·30) plus a rate for each child varying with age, is payable when the net income does not exceed £57·60 a week (£62·25 in 1991). The rate is then reduced by 70 pence for each pound by which net income exceeds this amount.

War Pensions and Related Services

Pensions are payable for disablement or death as a result of service in the armed forces or of certain injuries received in the merchant navy or civil defence during wartime; this also applies to civilians injured by enemy action. The amount depends on the degree of disablement and rank held in service. The maximum benefit for private soldiers is being increased from £76·60 a week to £84·90. An allowance is paid for dependants.

Extra allowances are paid for unemployability, restricted mobility, the need for constant attendance, the provision of extra comforts and for maintenance for a lowered standard of occupation. An age allowance is also payable to those aged 65 or over. Pensions are payable to war widows and other dependants; the pension for a private's widow is being increased from £60·95 to £67·60 a week.

Child Maintenance

The Government has published a White Paper setting out plans for a new system of maintenance payments to support children. Proposals include the introduction of a formula for calculating maintenance; the establishment of a child support agency to assess, collect and enforce maintenance payments; and changes to social security benefits which aim to help parents who are looking after children and who wish to go out to work. If implemented, the arrangements for the formula would be introduced in 1992; those for the child support agency in 1993.

Background

At present, child maintenance is payable, and can be enforced, if someone applies for a maintenance order and a court makes such an order. The applicant is usually the caring parent (the liable parent who lives with and has day-to-day care of the child or children), but others may apply for an order, including the Secretary of State for Social Security if the caring parent and the children are receiving income support.[1] In addition, the parents may come to a private arrangement with each other, or the absent parent may come to a private arrangement with the Department of Social Security.

The present system of maintenance is operated through hundreds of courts and social security offices throughout Britain. Decisions about how much maintenance is to be paid are based largely on discretion. In many cases the maintenance awarded is not paid at all or the payments fall into arrears and take many weeks to re-establish.

The White Paper proposals[2] form part of a wide-ranging review of the family justice system in England and Wales which the Government is undertaking. The first stage in the review is the implementation in October 1991 of the Children Act 1989 (see pp 207–9 and 450, 1989).[1] The review also includes consideration of the recommendations on divorce reform made by the Law Commission (for publication details see p 398) and of the reform of the remedies for domestic violence on which the Law Commission will report in 1991. The future arrangements for reconciliation, conciliation and welfare services in family proceedings are also being considered. In Scotland a major project on the law of children is in progress and recommendations on the divorce law have been made. In Northern Ireland, legislation comparable to the Children Act 1989 is being prepared and aspects of divorce and other family matters are under review.

As with other aspects of this review, the White Paper proposals aim to give priority to the welfare of children and to highlight their parents' responsibility for ensuring it. The proposals would affect any person who is liable to maintain a child. Under existing law, a child's legal parents have a responsibility to maintain him or her. This generally means both the child's natural parents, whether or not they are married; where the child has been adopted, it also includes adoptive parents. Generally, parents are liable to maintain their children until they leave school or finish their full-time education or training. In Scotland, the period of liability can extend up to the age of 25.

Minister's Statement

Introducing the White Paper in the House of Commons on 29 October (*Hansard*, Vol 178, No 164, cols 729–49), the Secretary of State for Social Security, Mr Tony Newton, said that the present arrangements for securing the financial maintenance of children were, by common consent, deficient. The arrangements were 'fragmented, inconsistent, and too often subject to uncertainty and delay'. They lacked systematic provision for review and updating as circumstances changed. Even where a maintenance obligation had been clearly established, it could be difficult to enforce and the caring parent might face great additional difficulties and pressures in protecting the children's rights. As a result, said Mr Newton, only 30 per cent of lone mothers and 3 per cent of lone fathers received regular maintenance for their children, and some two-thirds of lone parents and their children depended wholly or partly on income support.

Such a position was in the interests of neither the parents nor, above all, the children. It placed a large burden on those who paid tax, many of whom were themselves bringing up children on perhaps quite modest incomes. The cost of income-related benefits for lone parents had risen, in real terms, from less than £1,500 million in 1981-82 to more than £3,000 million in 1988–89.

Mr Newton reminded the House that measures had already been taken, either administratively or through legal changes such as those in the Social Security Act 1990 (see pp 87–8, 1989), to improve the present system. The proposals before the House set out the wider reform that was now required.

[1] For an outline of the main social security benefits see p 391.

[2] *Children Come First: The Government's Proposals on the Maintenance of Children.* The Lord Chancellor's Department, the Scottish Office, the Department of Social Security, the Northern Ireland Office and the Lord Advocate's Office. Cm 1263 and 1264 (two volumes – not sold separately). HMSO, £13·50. ISBN 0 10 112642 5.

[1] This article has been offprinted as COI reference paper *Child Welfare in Britain*, No 331/89.

The White Paper

The White Paper contains three major proposals:

– a clear formula for assessing maintenance, which could be applied administratively rather than through the courts;

– a purpose-built agency to undertake the assessment itself, and the work of collecting and enforcing where necessary; and

– changes in benefit rules to make it easier for lone parents to move from reliance on income support into work.

Assessing Maintenance

The White Paper proposes to establish a single system of child maintenance generally available to any person seeking maintenance for the benefit of a child, using a formula which would ensure consistent and predictable decisions on how much maintenance should be paid. Payments would bear a realistic relationship to the costs of caring for a child, and would be subject to annual review.

The formula would have four elements:

1 There would be a maintenance bill representing the day-to-day costs of caring for a child which all parents would be expected to pay if they could afford to do so. The size of the bill would depend on the number and ages of the children and would be based on income support rates, including the caring parent's[1] own personal allowance.

2 There would be an exempt income which the absent parent would keep before he paid any maintenance, so from his take-home pay he would keep enough to meet his own necessary expenses, including housing costs, and the costs of any other children he was liable to support.

3 Maintenance would be paid from the remaining income. The White Paper considers that once an absent parent's expenses have been met, he should share the remaining income equally with his children until the maintenance bill has been paid. In most cases, this would mean the absent parent keeping between two-thirds and three-quarters of his net income. However, the maintenance bill would not fix the maximum amount of child maintenance which should be paid. The White Paper considers that those parents who have sufficient income should pay something over and above the basic amount, so that the children would be able to enjoy extras as well as being provided with necessities. Where the caring parent had sufficient income, she would also be expected to contribute towards the maintenance bill.

4 A protected income level, which would be higher than income support, would be introduced to avoid the situation in which the absent parent might be better off on benefit than in work. There would also be an upper income limit on the operation of the formula, beyond which further support for the child would have to be sought in the courts.

Since the Government considers it no more acceptable for a caring parent to choose not to seek maintenance than for an absent parent to choose not to pay it, a deduction would be made from the adult personal allowance if the caring parent unreasonably refused to seek maintenance.

Child Support Agency

The agency would be responsible for tracing absent parents, assessing and collecting and, where necessary, enforcing maintenance payments. It would need powers to make a legally binding assessment, to acquire information and to determine the method of payment. It would review the maintenance payable every year. The agency would operate as a Next Steps executive agency within the Department of Social Security.

Once the agency had been set up, the courts would no longer decide applications for child maintenance or applications to vary existing awards. The courts would retain jurisdiction over related matters which arose when parents separated or divorced. Those matters would include residence of and contact with children, disputed paternity, property settlements and maintenance awarded for the spouse.

Parents might choose to apply to the agency or make their own private arrangements, using if they wished the published formula. Where, however, the caring parent was receiving income support or family credit for herself and the children, she would be obliged to use the agency's services.

Changes in Benefit Rules

Under the proposed changes, caring parents who receive family credit, housing benefit or community charge benefit will not have the first £15 of maintenance received taken into account in calculating their income. At the same time, the number of hours of work which qualify anybody to receive family credit would be reduced from 24 to 16 hours a week. Similar adjustments would be made to the rules for receipt of income support. This is intended to make it easier for parents to combine work with their responsibilities for caring for their children.

[1]Throughout this article the caring parent is referred to as 'she' and the absent parent as 'he'. This simply reflects the most common arrangement. All the proposals apply equally if the caring parent is the father and the absent parent is the mother.

Shorter Notes

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

The Environmental Protection Bill, which received Royal Assent on 1 November, makes a number of major changes to Britain's structure of environmental protection (see pp 81–4). These include:

– the introduction of a system of integrated pollution control;

– tougher regulations on waste disposal;

– a streamlined system for dealing with statutory nuisances;

– new powers and duties to deal with litter;

– controls on the use of genetically modified organisms;

– the reorganisation of the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission (see p 294); and

– increased penalties for polluting controlled waters.

Significant amendments have been made to the Act since January, when it received its second reading in the House of Commons. Among these are:

– reserve powers for the appropriate Secretary of State to set up regional Waste Regulation Authorities, if present initiatives for voluntary co-operation at regional level break down;

– a power for local authorities to collect abandoned shopping trolleys and charge their owners for their return;

– powers to obtain information about potentially harmful substances;

– public registers of land which may be contaminated;

– public registers about sea dumping and incineration;

– powers to ban the burning of crop residues; and

– the introduction of the Government's 'Action for Dogs' package, which includes measures for the collection and delivery of stray dogs, and enforcement of the existing collar and tag requirements.

The Minister for the Environment and Countryside, Mr David Trippier, welcomed the enactment and said that it was a landmark in the history of environmental legislation in Britain. The Act created a complete framework for pollution control into the next century, and would affect everyone, from major industrial corporations to individual citizens. Some of the measures, notably integrated pollution control, were as sophisticated as any in the world. 'This Act will further enhance our domestic environment and contribute significantly to the development of international environmental policy.'

Source: Department of the Environment news release, 1.11.90.

AIR QUALITY

Information on air quality in Britain is to be made available in weather bulletins, it was announced on 24 October. Launching the scheme, the Minister for the Environment and Countryside, Mr David Trippier, said that it highlighted the Government's determination to make environmental information available to the public.

Under the scheme, air quality will be assessed regularly in relation to the presence of ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, and will be designated either 'very good', 'good', 'poor' or 'very poor'. These classifications are designed to give a broad indication of pollutant levels, but also take account of European Community standards and World Health Organisation guidelines. Information will be provided by the Government's Warren Spring Laboratory from automatic monitoring stations around the country. It will be available daily to the Meteorological Office, so that air quality reports and outlooks can be included in its weather forecasts. A new recorded telephone message service, Air Quality Information Call, will be available 24 hours a day, giving air quality bulletins and an explanation of the figures they contain. In addition, the existing Weathercall service will also carry regional air quality bulletins along with its regional weather forecasts.

Mr Trippier said that the scheme was one of the first initiatives in the Government's environment White Paper (see pp 358-61)[1] to be implemented. The Department of the Environment was already spending some £3 million a year on monitoring air quality, and information was available to the press and public on request. However, by making air quality information available in weather bulletins, it would be brought to a wider audience as quickly as possible.

He added that Britain's air quality was generally good, and the Department of Health advised that in general there was no threat to health from likely air pollution in Britain. However, the Department had formed an expert group to consider advice to the medical profession for the benefit of individuals who were unusually sensitive to particular substances. Should air conditions enter the 'very poor' band, the Department would consider, in the light of the concentrations of pollutants reported, whether any general advice should be offered.

Mr Trippier stressed that the Government was determined to sustain and improve Britain's air quality. It was committed to new European Community legislation, which would mean that from 1993 onwards all new petrol-engined cars would have to be fitted with catalytic converters. Britain was pressing for the rapid introduction in the European Community of tough standards for diesel engine emissions (see p 150), while concentrations of sulphur dioxide were already being reduced substantially in most urban areas through existing control measures.

Source: Department of the Environment news release, 24.10.90.

AGREEMENT ON IRISH SEA

Britain and the Irish Republic have agreed joint initiatives to help tackle pollution incidents and to improve scientific knowledge of the Irish Sea, it was announced on 22 October.

Speaking at an Irish Sea Study Group conference, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, said that discussions had begun on co-operation over oil pollution at sea. The aim was to ensure that both countries made the most effective response to incidents. Joint plans would therefore be developed to cover notification and reporting systems, effective co-ordination of efforts during an incident and other ways that assistance might be offered from one country to the other.

He added that the two governments had agreed to establish an Irish Sea Science Co-ordination Group. A science co-ordinator would also be appointed to work towards better integration of existing pro-

[1]This is being offprinted as COI reference pamphlet *Britain's Environmental Strategy*, No 361/90.

grammes in the two countries. Priorities for further work would be assessed and more fundamental studies would be undertaken.

Mr Heathcoat-Amory said that the initiative would improve understanding of the marine environment and assist a wide range of government departments, universities and other researchers. In due course it would enable a more comprehensive assessment of the quality of the Irish Sea to be made.

Source: Department of the Environment news release, 22.10.90

HEALTH CARE

A major initiative aimed at setting targets for health care in England for the year 2000 for some of the main causes of disease and premature death was announced by the then Secretary of State for Health, Mr Kenneth Clarke,[1] on 9 October.

The conditions to be considered will include heart disease, cancer, asthma and diabetes. Existing targets, such as those on immunisation, will be kept under close review. The Government intends that National Health Service and professional bodies will be fully involved in identifying and establishing areas for health care priority and in setting targets for the year 2000 in selected areas.

On coronary heart disease, Mr Clarke said that Britain had already passed by a large margin the World Health Organisation target of a reduction of 15 per cent in deaths from circulatory diseases between 1980 and 2000. However, heart disease remained one of Britain's greatest health problems, and a revised target under the new initiative could be the reduction of 25 per cent in premature deaths between 1988 and 2000.

A consultative document containing proposals on the priority areas and possible targets will be published in early 1991.

Source: Department of Health news release, 9.10.90.

EDUCATION AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

The Government has welcomed the launch of the Foundation for Education and Business Partnerships, a new alliance between business and education, which seeks to provide a national focus for education-industry link activities (see pp 323-4). As well as receiving funding from the Government, the Foundation is financed by ten leading private sector corporations, including Marks and Spencer, Cadbury-Schweppes and Lloyds Bank. Its aims are to:

- bring about effective partnerships between education and business at all levels in every local community;
- broaden the range of partnership activities taking place at present; and
- increase publicity at national level for partnership activity.

The Foundation will seek to bring together work being done under the Government's local education and business partnerships initiative, which is designed to co-ordinate link activities and to identify priorities for action at local level. Advice on how education and business can work together effectively will be provided by the Foundation, which will act as a channel of communication between partnerships and the Government. It will aim to influence company policy at boardroom level in support of education-industry links and to work with Training and Enterprise Councils (see p 385) in developing and improving partnerships locally.

The underlying purpose of government assistance for education-business links is to facilitate action by individual firms and educational institutions. For example, the Rover Group has an Education Partnership Programme, under which it works with schools to improve the curriculum and make it more relevant to work. Marks and Spencer has produced a teaching and learning pack on Enterprise in Primary Schools. IBM makes twinning arrangements with local schools and is involved in several information technology initiatives in schools. British Petroleum (BP) provides work experience and work shadowing places. The company is also engaged in joint education-industry curriculum development projects for students, and it encourages secondments of teachers and teacher placements on BP training courses. Earlier in 1990, BP launched Partnerships for Technology, a major project to support technology education in Britain.

Sources: Department of Employment news release, 2.10.90; Department of Education and Science news release, 18.10.90.

TEACHER EXCHANGE SCHEME WITH THE IRISH REPUBLIC

Schools in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic will be able to develop long-term links under a scheme announced on 8 October by Dr Brian Mawhinney, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office, and the Irish Education Minister, Mrs Mary O'Rourke. The aim of the North-South Teacher Exchange Scheme is to establish enduring partnerships between secondary schools north and south of the border in order to encourage the development of understanding and reconciliation between young people from different traditions.

The scheme is being devised and administered by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Belfast and the Youth Exchange Bureau in Dublin, in collaboration with Co-operation North. (Co-operation North is a charity which promotes links between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic; it receives funds from both the British and Irish governments and European Community sources.)

[1] Mr Clarke was appointed Secretary of State for Education and Science on 2 November.

Under the scheme, teachers will work in each other's schools for two- to three-week periods. Joint projects involving curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as student exchanges are planned in the longer term. The scheme will begin in November 1990 when school principals will meet to draw up an agenda for the exchange process and for making initial contacts between schools. Later, visits by principals to each other's schools will be followed by informal teacher exchanges lasting two to three weeks. The operation of the scheme has been made possible by the agreement of the Irish Government to forgo the normal requirement for teachers to have a knowledge of the Irish language before they can teach in schools in the Irish Republic.

Welcoming the initiative, Dr Mawhinney said: 'We know that North-South exchanges by pupils and youth groups make a vital contribution to mutual understanding. I am delighted that we are now able to launch a scheme which will for the first time enable teachers to spend significant periods working in schools across the border and participating in all aspects of the schools' activities. This scheme ... will, I hope, ensure that not only the teachers themselves but many more young people can meet, become friends and develop a deeper understanding of each other's traditions.'

Source: Northern Ireland Office news release, 8.10.90.

General

The Victoria and Albert Museum. COI, No 171/90.

Government and Administration

The Working of the Select Committee System. Second Report from the Select Committee on Procedure, Session 1989-90. Vol. 1: Report, Proceedings of the Committee relating to the Report, and Appendices. HMSO, £12·15. ISBN 0 10 020100 8. Vol. 2: Minutes of Evidence. HMSO, £6·45. ISBN 0 10 291790 6.

Improving Management in Government – The Next Steps Agencies Review 1990 (see p 375). Cm 1261. HMSO, £8·30. ISBN 0 10 112612 3.

Progress in the Next Steps Initiative. The Government's Reply to the Eighth Report from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, Session 1989-90 (see p 375). Cm 1263. HMSO, £4·10. ISBN 0 10 112632 8.

Immigration, Nationality and Passports: A Report on the Work of the Departments 1989-90. A Home Office report containing statistical information and summarising progress made in various areas of policy that have been under discussion in the past year. Available from the Home Office Library, Publication Sales, Room 1001, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

Family Law: The Ground for Divorce. This Law Commission report on reforming the divorce law in England and Wales recommends that the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage remains the sole ground for divorce. It requires this gound to be proved by the passage of a one-year period during which couples may receive counselling, conciliation and mediation services. Law Commission report No 192. HMSO, £15. ISBN 0 10 263690 7.

External Affairs and Defence

Developments in the European Community January-June 1990 (see pp 376-7). Cm 1234. HMSO, £8·10. ISBN 0 10 112342 6.

Report on the Conduct and Context of the National Elections in Nicaragua on 25 February 1990. Dr David Browning. Cm 1222. HMSO, £3·75. ISBN 0 10 112222 5.

British Aid Statistics 1985-1989. Overseas Development Administration. Available from the ODA Information Department, Eland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5DH. £6·75. ISBN 0 902500 40 6.

Economic and Scientific Affairs

British Invisible Exports Council. Annual Report 1990. Available free from the Council, Windsor House, 39 King Street, London EC2V 8DQ.

81st Report of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise for the Year Ended 31 March 1990. Net receipts of taxes and duties amounted to about £52,100 million during the year, equal to almost 40 per cent of central government tax revenue. Net receipts of value added tax were £29,500 million. Seizures of illegal drugs with an estimated street value of some £240 million were made. Cm 1223. HMSO, £10·80. ISBN 0 10 112232 2.

Employment Training. Government Reply to the Third Report of the [House of Commons Employment] Committee in Session 1989-90 (see p 262). Third Special Report of the House of Commons Employment Committee, Session 1989-90. HMSO, £1·10. ISBN 0 10 264390 3.

Health and Safety: Research and Technological Services 1989-90. Health and Safety Executive. HMSO, £12·50. ISBN 0 11 885568 9.

Elders IXL Ltd and Grand Metropolitan PLC. A Report on the Merger Situation. Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Report finds that proposed arrangements between these two firms would be against the public interest, on the grounds that the brewing industry is characterised by strong vertical links between production and retailing and that the proposed mergers would create an unwelcome further concentration. Undertakings from the parties will be sought before the mergers are permitted. Cm 1227. HMSO, £8·70. ISBN 0 10 112272 1.

Insolvency – General Annual Report for the Year 1989. Report by the Insolvency Service on its activities during 1989; corporate and individual insolvencies over the year; insolvency practitioners; and prosecutions and disqualifications. Rises in company and individual insolvencies were recorded in 1989 compared with 1988. Department of Trade and Industry. HMSO, £3·75. ISBN 0 11 515262 8.

Investigation Handbook. A revised and updated guide into company investigations in line with rec-

ommendations made by the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee following its report into company investigations (see p 225). Department of Trade and Industry. HMSO, £7·50. ISBN 0 11 515260 1.

Report on Wages in Agriculture: 1 January to 31 December 1989. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. HMSO, £3·25. ISBN 0 11 242901 7.

Agricultural Marketing Schemes. Report of 1988-89. Among the six boards covered by the report are the Milk Marketing Board, the Scottish Milk Marketing Board, the British Wool Marketing Board and the Potato Marketing Board. Available from MAFF Publications, London SE99 7TP. £3·25.

The Food Safety Act 1990 and You, The Food Safety Act 1990: A Guide for Farmers and Growers, The Food Safety Act 1990: A Guide for Caterers and Their Employees. Three booklets (the first aimed primarily at the food industry), prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Health, and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices (see pp 145-7 and 270). Available from Food Sense, London SE99 7TT.

Food From Britain: Annual Report 1989-90. Available free from Food From Britain, 3rd Floor, 301-304 Market Towers, New Covent Garden Market, London SW8 5NQ.

Food Labelling Survey England and Wales. Report on a survey carried out in April and May 1990. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. HMSO, £7·75. ISBN 0 11 242904 1.

Scotland's Forest Heritage. A guide to features of the five [forestry] regions of Scotland. HMSO, £5. ISBN 0 11 494139 4.

Transport Statistics for London: 1990 Edition. Department of Transport. HMSO, £9·90. ISBN 0 11 550982 8.

Road Accidents Great Britain 1989: The Casualty Report. Department of Transport. HMSO, £9·75. ISBN 0 11 550989 5.

Research in the United Kingdom, France and West Germany: A Comparison (see p 384). Science and Engineering Research Council. Available from SERC, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN21 1ET. Volume 1, £10. ISBN 1 870669 81 9.

The Structure of Research Expenditure. Presents data on how research centres in universities, research institutes and industry divide up their budgets. Available from Science and Engineering Policy Studies Unit, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG. £30. ISBN 0 85403 419 6.

Environmental, Social and Cultural Affairs

Consultation Paper: Planning Controls over Agricultural and Forestry Buildings in England and Wales. Department of the Environment and Welsh Office paper consulting on possible changes to permitted development rights for agriculture and forestry. Available free from DoE Distribution Centre, Building 3, Victoria Road, Ruislip HA4 0NZ.

Community Businesses: Case Studies of Good Practice in Urban Regeneration. Report prepared by Land and Urban Analysis Ltd for the Inner Cities Directorate of the Department of the Environment *Good Practice in Urban Regeneration* series. HMSO, £16·75. ISBN 0 11 752301 1.

Housing and Construction Statistics 1979-89. Department of the Environment. HMSO, £21. ISBN 0 11 752342 9.

Report of the Noise Review Working Party 1990 (see pp 389-91). HMSO, £7·20. ISBN 0 11 752343 7.

The Control of Noise at Surface Mineral Workings. Prepared by WS Atkins Engineering Ltd for the Department of the Environment. HMSO, £11·95. ISBN 0 11 752338 0.

General Household Survey: Preliminary Results for 1989. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) Monitor SS 90/3. Available from OPCS, St Catherine's House, 10 Kingsway, London WC2B 6JP. £2.

Prison Statistics England and Wales 1989. Cm 1221. HMSO, £17·40. ISBN 0 10 112212 8.

Report on the Work of the Prison Service April 1989–March 1990. Cm 1302. HMSO, £12·20. ISBN 0 10 113022 8.

DH Yearbook of Research and Development 1990. Department of Health. HMSO, £14. ISBN 0 11 321320 4.

Education Observed: Information Technology and Special Educational Needs in Schools. A Review by HMI [Her Majesty's Inspectorate]. HMSO, £2·95. ISBN 0 11 270729 7.

Information Technology in Britain's Schools. COI, No 239/90.

Children Come First: The Government's Proposals on the Maintenance of Children (see pp 393-4). The Lord Chancellor's Department, the Scottish Office, the Department of Social Security, the Northern Ireland Office and the Lord Advocate's Department. Cm 1263 and 1264 (two volumes – not sold separately). HMSO, £13·50. ISBN 0 10 112642 5.

Arts Council. Annual Report and Accounts 1989-90. Available free from the Council, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ. ISBN 0 7287 0616 4.

Sports Council Annual Report 1989-90. Available free from the Sports Council, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP.

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